

The
ADVENTURERS



MAURICE
FRANCIS
EGAN



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THE ADVENTURERS





Lockyard grasped the leg of the nearest duck, lost his balance and went under the water. The other duck, released, flew upward with a cry of joy. Bertrand plunged in after Lockyard. Page 204.

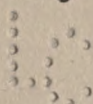
The Adventurers

By

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Former American Minister to Denmark

*Author of "The Watson Girls," "The Watsons
of the Country," "Jasper Thorn," "Jack
Chumleigh at Boarding School," etc.*



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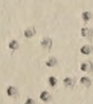
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To my

Seven Grandchildren :

Jerome and Katharine Elmer Murphy ;

Jane and Katharine Egan ;

Maurice Francis,

Jack and Carmelita O'Reilly

The author gratefully acknowledges the kind permission of the Editor of *Ave Maria* to use part of this story which originally appeared with great success in that publication some time ago.

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The Adventurers

I

IN NORMANDY

THE war which, we all know, burst upon the world in August, 1914, brought terrible changes into many lives. It brought a great change into the lives of Amélie and Bertrand de Value. Their mother, an American (a Miss Amélie Watson), had died in 1912; and their father (Captain de Value), late in September, 1914, was in the trenches, fighting. The two children were now left alone in an old manor house on the coast of Normandy,—their father's château, near Paris, having been closed for the summer.

Amélie de Value was just fifteen years of age—her birthday had occurred on the Feast of the Assumption, which is a great holiday in France. The servants had given her flowers, and the neighbors shown her all kinds of amiable attentions; the curé had presented her with a dachshund (she liked dogs); and, altogether, it was a very happy day,—“just the kind of day Amélie

likes," said Bertrand, who was thirteen years of age, "because she's the centre of everything."

"I have a 'glory' all to myself," Amélie said; "and, of course, that is nice."

Amélie was always honest, and she saw no reason why she should pretend not to like the attention she had received.

Fairy lamps were laid in the grass of the garden in the evening, and she and Bertrand had each a cup of black coffee after dinner. A telegram came from their father, and the two children laid it, covered with Marshal Niel roses, on their mother's tomb in the little graveyard near the chapel of Notre Dame de Falaise. Old Madame la Brune, who looked after them, had remitted all lessons—even the easy vacation lessons—for two days, so that Bertrand could share his sister's "glory." And the sea! And the Norman people making their pilgrimage in honor of Our Lady! It was a time of real glory,—sunlight, flowers, fruit, and the dazzling ocean!

In September, Madame la Brune told the children that they were to leave their old house on the Normandy coast, and to go to the United States,—to their mother's own land. Amélie wept. Bertrand could not understand why she wept.

“We shall see red Indians,” he said, “and the great buffaloes, and the forest,—the big forest I read about in ‘The Last of the Mohicans.’”

“All that is passed long ago,” answered Amélie. “Father fears that the Germans may come here; therefore he sends us away. I am glad that I can speak and read English. Madame la Brune has given me this letter from our relative. He writes of a nice, quiet house in the country. He says that, as we are his nephew and niece, he seems to be a great-uncle. He will give us a home and look after our affairs.”

“I shall not like him,” replied Bertrand, decidedly, “if he is an eater of priests, like Raoul, in the village.”

“Raoul does not really eat priests,” Amélie felt it her duty to explain; “he only talks as if he did, when he drinks too much of the cider.”

“But our uncle ——”

“He will leave us free to practice our religion, and he will do what he can for us. It is the best for us to go, and wait until father sends for us. But I do not fear the Germans.”

“Then let him leave us here. The Germans may be near the château, but they can not come here,” said Bertrand, decidedly. “If there are

no red Indians or buffaloes in the country of my mother, why should I go? I shall stay at home, and be ready to fight for my own country when I am older."

"We *must* go."

"Monsieur le Curé can take care of us."

"But our father and uncle will it—that is our great-uncle,—and we must pack up and go. Ah, our dear France! The sea, and Our Lady of the Cliffs, and the roses, and the good lessons from Madame la Brune!"

"Oh, the lessons!" said Bertrand. "I should be happy enough if there were no lessons in mother's country. But my rabbits! I shall take them with me. I wonder if the American boys can recite as many lines from Racine as I can. I took the prize for the great speeches in 'Athalie,' you know. They will open their eyes when they hear that,—they will open their eyes!"

"I am not sure. Mother told us that the American boys play hard games, and I never heard her say that they could recite poetry. And, then, they do not speak French."

"Are they savages? There is only one great language and one great nation—the French," said Bertrand. "I will teach them! They are

no better than red Indians, if they do not know that."

Amélie laughed through her tears.

"What does a small boy like you know about the world?"

"When these Americans see my school prizes, they will know something about *me*," said Bertrand proudly. "When they hear that my father's ancestors fought in the Crusades, what will they say?"

"We must wait to see what they are like. The uncle is good, or he would not offer to keep us."

"We have money to pay," said Bertrand, proudly. "He has never seen us. Why should we not remain with Monsieur le Curé? He is our old friend, and the friend of our mother and father. I could help in the garden, and serve his Mass, and I can sing. I know the Vesper Psalms already. What more? Some day I shall be a soldier and fight the enemies of France, is it not so? But I will never fight for the Americans, if I can not be a soldier at home. And when they ask me, if I refuse" (Bertrand puffed out his chest in a haughty manner), "of what use shall I be to the Americans? Of what use, I ask?"

"There are more things to be done than fight-

ing. I will not hear of war all the time; it pains my heart,—it pains my heart!”

Amélie put her hands before her face, and Bertrand saw tears trickling through her fingers.

“O Amélie!” Bertrand said, trying to pull her hands away from her eyes. “Look at me! Do not cry! Père Chalais says that I am a strong boy,—a very strong boy; and I will protect you against all the enemies of France.”

“Thank you, dear! It is not that. Thank you!” Amélie kissed her ferocious brother.

Bertrand began to pack his books into a small box. The children were in his room, which looked toward the sea. His kepi and sword were rolled very carefully in his *peignoir*, or what we would call a bath-robe.

“You may need the *peignoir*; keep it in the dress suitcase.”

“No; Madame la Brune says that it is now too cold to bathe. I shall not need it, as I shall not go into the sea again. The summer is over.”

“You may need it on the voyage.”

“I shall need, then, also my sword. Suppose pirates came aboard? A Frenchman’s place will be to defend his flag with his sword, is it not so?”

“Well, I am different,” said Amélie. “I am

not thinking of pirates. When they come, I will trust in the good God."

Bertrand removed the palm branch from the vase in front of the little statue of St. Joseph.

"That will go, too," he said, kissing it. "And this."

It was a small roll which Bertrand had received at Mass on the Sunday before,—a piece of blessed bread given each Sunday to everybody in the church, according to the Norman custom.

"I shall take it as a souvenir of the last Sunday I helped to carry the blessed bread in the chapel. It always smells so good at the High Mass.—O Bubi, Bubi!"

Bertrand ran to the window and laid the roll (first breaking it into pieces) on the floor of the balcony. Bubi was a large sea-gull, a particular and greedy friend of Bertrand's, who, when he found no fish, or liked a change of diet, hung about the balcony of the room.

"Bubi is hungry to-day, and perhaps not well," Bertrand said, thinking that he must excuse the sacrifice of his roll, "and the blessed bread will be better for him; besides, St. Francis would all the more have given his birds bread that had been blessed, is it not so?"

"I am afraid you are a poet." Amélie picked up Bertrand's disordered belongings and began to pack them. "You have so much imagination. Madame la Brune says that I have none. The greedy Bubi called the others, and they are eating the blessed bread."

"No, no!" said Bertrand. "They have smelled the bread, and come. Bubi never calls: he eats all himself. I know Bubi from the others, because he is fatter. How he shall miss me!"

The gulls (a half dozen by this time) flew off, and Amélie was now sure of Bertrand's attention for a while. The children went on with their work, enlivened by the soft splash of the sea on the *plage*,—the brown pebbly beach they loved.

Madame la Brune entered; she commended their diligence.

"You are invited to dine with Monsieur le Curé—both of you—this evening." Madame la Brune spoke very slowly and softly. She was a little woman, dressed in a brown frock, which seemed to suit her name. Her eyes were keen and brown, and her hair had probably been brown before it had become white. She wore a black lace cap, and she generally carried in her hands a coarse netted bag, which at times held

everything, from her spectacles and her knitting to cauliflower and potatoes. Onions were probably the only things that Madame la Brune never carried in her bag. "And, as the parting gift, the cook of Père Chalais has made for you a *gâteau à la Saint-Honoré*."

"Oh!" said both the children, ecstatically. They liked the cake very much.

Amélie was the first to recover herself.

"We shall send it to the soldiers. We must offer it for our country. And I must leave my new dachshund to be sold for charity."

"No, no!" Bertrand was very much excited. "I will send my new five franc piece to the soldiers, and then we can eat the *gâteau* in peace; it would be hard to send it. But the dachshund might just as well be sold."

"Well," said Madame la Brune, smiling, "you can each give a franc to Sister Pélagie for the Red Cross Hospital, with a clear conscience, and eat the *gâteau*, and I will take care of the dog until you come back from America. In the meantime I will conduct the packing of the small boxes; the great trunks have already gone to Havre. And now you can play on the beach; keep in sight of the house. It is well that you should be out in the good French air; for the

day after to-morrow we shall depart for Dieppe."

There was a great deal of fun on the *plage*. Several boys and girls with skirts and trousers pulled up, were chasing an imaginary shark, their governesses mounting guard over their shoes. Old Vaucoubert,¹ who was at times allowed to sing in church, was warbling some old chansons, as he leaned on his stick. The tide was coming in. Amélie and Bertrand hastened to take off their shoes and stockings, and joined the hunters of the shark, while Vaucoubert sang, "*Il y était une Bergère.*" It was delightful to be free; and these two children were so seldom free! There was always Madame la Brune. Even when their mother was alive there was always Madame la Brune; for it was her belief that well-bred children should never be left alone. Amélie jumped and splashed and yelled, and Bertrand shouted at the top of his voice.

Manette, the *bonne* of the Des Arches children, called to her charges:

"You are not nice,—you are too free! Remember to be ladies and gentlemen even when you hunt the fierce shark!"

¹ Pronounced "Vo-coo-bàre."

“Oh, oh!” said Bertrand, his trousers wet up to the waist. “I am free not to be a gentleman; I am going to ‘the land of the free and the home of the brave.’”

“Only the French are brave,” said the large Des Arches boy.

“The free must be brave!—the free must be brave!” shouted Amélie, whose plaits of yellow hair had become untied. She was enjoying herself.

“Poor children!” said Manette to Barbara, a young woman who was very dignified, being a governess and not a nurse. “Let them be happy in France for a few days; for they must go to the strange country discovered by our King Louis XV.”

“You mean Canada?” asked Barbara, who was English.

“Oh, no: America,” said Manette.

“Is it true, then,” asked Vaucoubert, “that the young De Values are going to America?” He stopped singing.

There was a sorrowful note in their voices as the two women answered:

“It is true.”

“Then,” said Vaucoubert, “they are indeed unhappy. I have a nephew in America. It is

not like France. You broil in the summer, you freeze in the winter, and—it is terrible! one must always speak English. And they speak of ‘miles,’—‘miles,’ instead of kilomètres! And to turn kilomètres into miles, you must multiply by five and divide by eight. Think of it! My nephew says he hopes one day to be a great singer like me. He makes money, but he must live among the strange people who have neither the speech of France nor the knowledge of France. He writes to me of the great, green melons they eat in the summer, and of the maize which they bite off with their teeth, like the pigs. Ah, my poor children! How they will long for the good *pot au feu* and the songs of France! I will give them a letter to my nephew, and I will teach them a song which he will know; it is a song which I composed for him. Come, my children!” he called. “There is yet some sunshine left; I will teach you a little song for my nephew who is in America. Come!”

The children were growing tired of the hunting of the shark, and the water had a chill in it; so they gathered around Vaucoubert in a warm place on the beach, while he taught them his little song. It began:

“ If you were queen of roses,
And I were king,
And all the roses in the world were mine,
And everything,
We’d offer them upon Our Lady’s shrine.”

Bertrand had a voice like a lark; and Amélie sang very well, too. The other children joined with Vaucoubert’s trembling tones. It was easy to catch the air:

“ Si vous étiez reine des roses,
Et moi le roi! ”

It was an old-fashioned melody.

“ I arranged it from an air of the times of Jeanne d’Arc,” said Vaucoubert. “ You have caught it? Now, altogether! ”

They sang the three stanzas very well.

“ Charming!” exclaimed Vaucoubert.

“ Nobody in the whole world knows that song except Guy and us; and when you meet him and sing that, he will know that you are little Normans and my friends.”

“ That will be lovely!” said Amélie, humming the tune. “ It will be better than a letter of introduction; better than a photograph, for photographs are not the same when people have changed.”

Vaucoubert beamed on his little group. His red face was a mass of wrinkles when he smiled, and his grey hair stood up straight; a fierce white mustache covered his upper lip.

“Again!” he called.

The little group, assisted by Manette and Barbara, began again:

“Si vous étiez des roses!”

Vaucoubert beat time with energy.

“It is from my opera,” he said,—“an opera I shall never finish, but Guy may.”

“We will help Guy when we see him,” said Bertrand; “though I do not know what an opera is. Depend on us!”

Madame la Brune was now seen coming toward them. The children danced forward to meet her; they knew that she would not scold, as she had given them a general permission, which included the privilege of wading in the sea.

“*Ah, mes enfants,*” she said, “you are not to start so early! A telegram says that the steamer will not sail so soon. There is some talk of mines. They are,” she added by way of explanation, “terrible, explosive things that the nations at war with one another hide in the ocean;

and if a big ship touches them, there is a crash."

"Oh, la! la!" exclaimed Manette. "I will never trust myself to go on the ocean,—never!"

"Ah, you are only a woman!" replied Bertrand. "We Frenchmen are never afraid. Show me a mine, Madame la Brune, and I will put it in its place!"

"You are a little St. George. But the mines are dangerous," said Vaucoubert.

Madame la Brune was a serious person. In her opinion, this was nonsense.

"The big trunks have gone off already. They are in Havre by this time, and yet the steamer will not sail because of the mines. At least, my friend who sent me the telegram says so."

"Ah, this wretched war!" exclaimed Vaucoubert. "And yet it is well; for the children will be kept in their beloved France."

"Not for long." Madame put her handkerchief to her eyes. "Their great-uncle awaits them, and a way must be found. And another dreadful thing has happened. My daughter Louise is very ill, and I can not leave her now; she is at Ault. And I promised to take the children to Dieppe, and then to Havre, and put them in care of Captain Grandcourt, whose

steamer is the great 'La Lune,' which, as everybody knows, crosses the Atlantic in just more than a week."

"Louise may be well by that time."

"Oh, but I promised to take them to Dieppe first, to say good-bye to some of their mother's old friends! But Louise is suffering."

"I will take them to Dieppe, if you will trust them to me." Vaucoubert stretched himself to his full height. "I am not young, and I should like to make a little journey before I die."

"O dear Vaucoubert!" Madame la Brune was much relieved. Vaucoubert's voice could not be trusted, though he believed he was a great singer; but otherwise he was the most trustworthy person, much respected by Captain de Value. Vaucoubert still believed in his voice. He had sung very well in his day; but that day was long past. Still, his songs pleased the children. And he had such a stock of stories!

"Oh, how lovely!" Amélie said, putting on her shoes. "I shall write to papa to-night. He said he would join us in America as soon as the war is over."

"It is decided, then, that I shall take the children to Dieppe, and wait till you, Madame, join us?"

“Your expenses shall be paid.”

“I care not,” said Vaucoubert, clicking his heels together in a guard bow. “I am not poor, and the pleasure of the journey will suffice.”

Everybody said good-bye to everybody else.

“Come, children!” called Madame la Brune. “We must dress for the little dinner at Monsieur le Curé’s.”

“How happy you are!” Manette said to her own charges. “You may stay in your own dear country.”

All the children went away, singing:

“If you were queen of roses,
And I were king . . .”

II

MAKING FRIENDS ON THE WAY TO HAVRE

THE children took small note of the dreadful news agitating the people around them; news of battles and sudden deaths. By the middle of September, the little seaside town in which they lived was almost deserted. The pleasure-lovers had fled earlier, like butterflies before a cold blast of wind; and most of the young men had gone to join the army. The fishermen were now all old or middle-aged men. The German army was threatening Paris, and the women of the Mers were divided between sorrow for those who had gone so suddenly, and enthusiasm for the cause for which they were fighting.

Some American tourists passed through Mers in a great panic, fearing that they could not reach home. They happened to call on Père Chalais on the evening he gave his farewell supper to the children. They were asked to have a share of St. Honoré's beautiful cake, which consisted of a great deal of whipped cream, surrounded by crystallized oranges and sugared nuts

and grapes. The *gâteau* of St. Honoré would alone have made the occasion great, even if the children had not been about to leave,—even if the Americans, Mr. and Mrs. Ellis, had not come to pay their respects to the parish-priest, who gave some information about the sailing of the French steamers for New York. Mrs. Ellis was a kind, motherly woman, anxious to be back with her own children in New York.

“Poor little souls!” she said. “And they are to be sent in care of the Captain. Monsieur le Curé,” she added, in very good French, “ask their governess to let us take care of them on the voyage. You say that their uncle lives in Ohio. He could easily meet us, or come for them to our house.”

“It would give us great pleasure,” her husband said in English. “Poor little things! We Americans will look after them until the war is over, and they can then come back to France.”

Vaucoubert, who was, of course, one of the guests, rose, clicked his heels, and bowed.

“Pardon!” he exclaimed. “Madame la Brune, who is needed by her sick daughter, has entrusted these children—the children of a hero of France—to me, and I must be faithful to my trust.”

Mr. Ellis was inclined to laugh,—an inclination which he concealed by pinning two small American flags on the right shoulder of each of the children.

“The left shoulder, the shoulder near the heart,” said Mr. Ellis, “is reserved for the flag of France.”

Vaucoubert had frowned: he was now all smiles.

“It is well,” he responded.

The incident seemed graceful, but unimportant to the *curé*. Afterward he wished that he had cut short Vaucoubert’s eloquence, and given the children into the kind hands of Mr. and Mrs. Ellis.

Père Chalais could speak no English, but he and Mr. Ellis had become friends at once. Mr. Ellis, a tall heavily-bearded man, had such pleasant, brown eyes, and his handshake was so warm; and he smiled so amiably.

“When my husband smiles,” Mrs. Ellis said, “he speaks all languages. This little girl speaks all languages, too. But the boy,—he will have a harder time in life; he seldom smiles.”

This was true. Bertrand, who was merry enough at heart, seldom smiled. His eyebrows were heavy and black, and his lips rather thin;

he had an appearance of sulkiness, when he was merely serious. He sometimes laughed, but only, as he often said, when there was something worth laughing at. Père Chalais was sure there was no occasion for the anxiety and even fear which Mr. Ellis showed at the news that the French Line would stop its sailings for some time. He talked—Mrs. Ellis translated—as if some awful calamity were certain to overtake his wife and himself.

“We French,” said Père Chalais, “are more calm than you, even with the Prussians on our land. But you worry because you may lose a little money, or perhaps be obliged to sail by a less fast line.”

“Time is money,” said Mr. Ellis.

Père Chalais shook his head.

“My husband is not accustomed to wait,” said Mrs. Ellis. “We Americans never wait.”

Père Chalais laughed.

“All things come to him who knows how to wait, Madame Ellis.”

“In America we do not believe that.”

Mr. Ellis interrupted:

“What does he say? I wish I could understand French. I never thought languages were worth learning.”

"That, if we know how to wait, we shall not waste time in hurrying too much."

"*Festina lente*," said Mr. Ellis. "'Make haste slowly.' I have heard that it can be done, but I never tried it."

"*Festina lente*," echoed Bertrand. "I know what that means. The gentleman can not be American, for he speaks Latin. And he is not like a red Indian. He does not wear skins."

Mrs. Ellis repeated this remark to her husband, who laughed, and patted Bertrand on the head.

"That is the way I scalp good little boys!" he said.

But Bertrand shrank away,—these Americans were not to be trusted until one knew them very well!

The day wore on. Rumors of the fury of the war increased as the German army neared Paris. Telegrams from Captain de Value arrived almost daily, and so the children were not worried as to their father's fate. Louise, Madame la Brune's daughter, grew worse and worse. There was a rumor that her husband had been shot. All was anxiety in the little town. War had made everyday life terrible; and it had come so suddenly

that the people had no time to adjust themselves to the strange condition of things.

"When will father come back?" asked the little boys and girls.

"Soon."

"But when?"

Perhaps even then the father, who had played with them so merrily a few days before, was lying dead on the field of battle!

"And we shall never see him again on this earth!" the mothers often said. Then they thanked God for the little chapel, where the Sorrowful Mother stretched out her arms to them. They could not see her, but her statue was there, and the serene face and the pitying eyes brought comfort to them.

All the priests had gone to war except Père Chalais. But he was a host in himself; he consoled, he comforted; he often secured hopeful news for those who thought they had no hope. Of course, all the summer tourists were gone, but the farm work and the fishing and all the other usual tasks must be carried on. What a difference the war made! No day came without terrible fears coming with it. When the sun rose, the women on the farm asked of what deaths they should hear that day. Some terribly wounded

men came back to die or to be useless for the rest of their lives. In Germany, the same sorrows were felt.

Vaucoubert had been a little drummer boy in the French army of 1870 when the Germans took Paris. He was now too old to fight; and he had determined that he would not remain in France if he could not fight; and, when the telegrams from Captain de Value arrived, he insisted more and more that his children should leave as soon as possible.

Vaucoubert was an old man. Everybody thought that he was a sensible man,—wise enough, except when it came to the qualities of his voice. He still believed that he could sing, but much of his voice had gone long ago. What remained was spoiled by all kinds of trills and tremblings; though he could, when he forgot these, sing a simple little song very pleasantly. It was in the church that he liked “to show off.” And Père Chalais and his people endured his trillings, because Vaucoubert was good-natured and never said a bad word about anybody.

The day for the children to go to Dieppe arrived.

“Madame la Brune,” Vaucoubert said, with his grandest air, “I can not fight for France;

therefore, I will leave my dear country and go, with Amélie and Bertrand, among the American red Indians until happier times. I will leave the children in the city of their uncle, where there are perhaps some civilized Frenchmen, and go farther to teach the red Indians. That shall be my mission when I have delivered the children to their protector. I have saved much money in my life; I will spend some, and give some to my nephew Guy."

Père Chalais was doubtful of this plan. Vaucoubert had no experience as a traveller, and he was very fixed in his ideas. Nevertheless, Captain de Value wrote that he approved of it. The port of sailing was not far, and the mobilization of the troops would not at present affect travel greatly in that part of France.

He advised that the party should cross to England, and take the steamer at Liverpool. He forgot that Vaucoubert knew no English; but Père Chalais remembered that Madame de Value had taught her daughter to speak English well, and Amélie was very intelligent and practical for her age. The boxes, trunks, and the important baggage had already been sent to Havre. Some necessary articles were packed in bags, and Amélie was allowed to take her precious dressing

case with her. This was a birthday present from her father, and she was very proud of the silver-backed brushes it held.

They were off at last,—Vaucoubert in his thick blue jacket and heavy cap to match, with a big, well-corded box. The journey began favorably enough. Amélie and Bertrand forgot their sorrows in the movement of the train. There were soldiers at all the stations, and a constant succession of new things to see. They lunched comfortably at one o'clock. Madame la Brune had given them sandwiches and cake and hot coffee in a thermos bottle. Life seemed pleasant until it began to grow dark.

All of a sudden the train stopped. Something had gone wrong with the locomotive,—“a hot box,” Vaucoubert said. All the passengers descended in the dark.

“Come!” cried Vaucoubert. “There is a porter; he will take our luggage to the other train. Run! it will soon start.”

A stalwart porter in a blouse seized the bags, and all four ran as fast as they could; the children were pushed into a first-class compartment, but Vaucoubert could not follow them; he was too slow. The luggage was pushed in after them, and Amélie was delighted to have the

chance of throwing a franc to the faithful porter. She saw him pick it up, and take off his cap respectfully, as the train moved out.

"Oh," she said, with a sigh, "I know how it feels to be a grown-up young lady! I almost wish Vaucoubert would not come. I could then manage everything for you, Bertrand, and the people would call me 'Mademoiselle.'"

"It would not be well," said Bertrand.

"Why not? I have all the money sewed up in my blouse. Madame told me to give it to my *marraine* at Dieppe, and that she would arrange it all for the voyage. Why not?"

"Because it is not right that a little girl should manage when there is a man with her—or, at least, one who will be a man some day."

Amélie laughed heartlessly.

"Age counts now, Bertrand; besides, I can speak languages. I know English, and I can even say some Latin words. But where is Monsieur Vaucoubert?"

Vaucoubert was nowhere to be seen.

"He will find us at Dieppe," Amélie said tranquilly. "He must find us, since he has the address of my godmother in Dieppe, and of my uncle in America. He will turn up."

The children calmly went to sleep. When they

awoke, the rest of the compartment was occupied by a woman and three children. The electric light in the roof was carefully covered with silk, so that the passengers might sleep in peace. Even in the half light, Amélie could see that the woman looked tired.

Her children, covered with rugs, lay about her. Amélie heard the woman sigh, and, true to her character, she became interested at once. Madame la Brune frequently complained that Amélie was not a French child at all: she was always minding other people's business. Bertrand, too, had often found fault with this peculiarity, which sometimes involved him in the work of looking after strange children who were lost, or who excited Amélie's interest by weeping.

The woman sighed again.

"You suffer, Madame?" Amélie asked in French.

The woman took her hand from her eyes and looked at Amélie inquiringly, but she only shook her head.

"You suffer, Madame?" Amélie repeated. Again the woman shook her head.

"I do not understand," she said in English.

"I understand," Amélie answered.

"And you speak English?" asked the woman, incredulously. "Oh, I am so glad! Then you can help me. I am wretched! But we must speak low. The children are asleep, and your little sister, too."

"My brother," corrected Amélie, looking proudly at Bertrand, who was hidden in a steamer rug.

"Oh, I am so glad you spoke!" The woman passed her hand over her hair, as if to apologize for her disarray. "I am in such trouble! I am an American married to an American citizen of German descent, and I came over to Alsace to look after some property my husband had inherited. We thought it would be such a nice trip for the children, and I brought them."

"Three," said Amélie, "unless you have another one under the seat."

"Four." The woman began to cry. "Four. My little Alphonsus is lost."

"Lost!" exclaimed Amélie, clutching Bertrand's shoulder. "Oh, we, too, have lost Monsieur Vaucoubert! But he shall be found again."

"Ah!" the woman wailed, "my dear little Alphonsus is only four years of age."

Amélie sat up very straight and listened.

"We were caught in the war," the woman continued. "We found ourselves in the German lines. The soldiers at first thought we were English; but they were kind to the children; the honest soldiers gave them soup and bread. Then my passport and my trunk came. After that we fell among the French, and here we are. When I give my name, Mrs. 'Schmidmeyer,' the soldiers say that I am German, for they can not read my American passport. Perhaps I am a spy, they say. At Dieppe they would have held me prisoner, but some kind Americans, Mr. and Mrs. Ellis, helped me to get on the train."

"But surely we have not yet reached Dieppe?"

"Oh, yes; we passed it long ago!"

"Horrible!" said Amélie. "My brother and I are lost, too. We were bound for Dieppe, and then for America."

"Where in America?" asked Mrs. Schmidmeyer, with interest.

"Oh, somewhere in America! I do not know the address. Monsieur Vaucoubert, who takes care of us, has it."

"You poor child."

"Why?" asked Amélie, calmly. "I have money, and a tongue in my head. I am sure Vaucoubert will turn up. At any rate, we can

get to America somehow,—of course I mean North America. Our great-uncle lives in Ohio or Iowa, or some place called like that.”

“You poor child!” repeated Mrs. Schmidmeyer.

“Your own poor child,” said Amélie,—“I think you’d better look for him.”

“You are right! My poor little Phonse! A soldier helped us on the train—there was an awful crowd,—and then I lost sight of him, and I couldn’t make anybody understand.” She clasped her hands, and began to sob.

Amélie pulled the rug over Bertrand; she knew how she would feel if *he* were lost.

“Don’t cry, Mrs. Schmidmeyer,” she went on. “Just say your prayers and trust in his Guardian Angel and in me. I can speak French, you know.”

Amélie’s voice was full of confidence.

“I can help the poor woman,” she said to herself. “I never failed in anything yet in my life, except in making omelettes. And what are guardian angels for if they can not take charge of those intrusted to them by the great, good God?—Have courage!” she spoke aloud. “You must have some sandwiches, and we can put more

hot coffee in this big bottle. Don't cry, please! Take a sandwich."

"Thank you,—thank you! I can not eat," said the poor mother.

"Well, if I am to help you, I must eat," observed Amélie, opening the box of sandwiches which had belonged to Vaucoubert and was as yet untouched. "There are many," she said. "Our friend has a good appetite,—*le bon Vaucoubert!* I know he will forgive us for eating his ham and chicken. There is enough for us all. Besides, I have half my own packed still."

The very look of Amélie gave the poor woman courage. Amélie's eyes were clear and brown, and they always looked straight at people. She was tall for her age, and thin; but she moved as if she were of mixed steel and India rubber, and it was a proverb in her family that she always "fell on her feet." Her American mother had brought her up on much exercise and many cold water baths; and, if Amélie had too much confidence for a girl of her age, it must be admitted that she was afraid of nothing "except mortal sin"; whereas Bertrand had many fears. For instance, he always saw lions and "things" in the dark.

III

THE SON OF A SOLDIER OF FRANCE

MRS. SCHMIDMEYER was glad to accept one of Vaucoubert's sandwiches, so large that it seemed to have been cut with a hatchet. And presently the three children awoke. There was a boy of about fifteen, a little girl of ten, and another small boy of eight. Amélie asked their names.

"Carl, Maria and Mark."

"Well, Carl, Maria, and Mark, we will now eat."

The poor children were evidently hungry and Amélie, whom Madame la Brune had tried to govern with a heavy hand, was delighted to act as an untrammelled lady, a real giver of bread.

The three children were shy at first. When little Maria asked for "'Phonse," the whole family burst into tears. Their sobs awakened Bertrand. Amélie was very sorry. At the same time, the feeling of being free to manage the business of other people rather pleased her.

"We shall find him," she said confidently. "See! I have put away a large ham sandwich for him."

This announcement solaced the family grief for a while. Surely, if there were a ham sandwich for Alphonsus, he must be alive and capable of eating. Even the mother was more hopeful.

“You have lost your Alphonsus because you could not make yourself understood in the French language. If the whole world would speak the beautiful French language, we should all understand one another, and there would be no war,” said Amélie, decidedly. “That is my opinion.”

Bertrand looked with hostile intentions at Carl. He measured Carl’s strength with his eye. Carl doubled his fists. Of course, the first thing to be done to this French boy would be to punch his head, and he was ready.

Amélie took little Maria into the toilet room and washed her face and smoothed her hair. It was better than playing with a doll. And the flaxen-haired Maria was glad to be looked after, —her mother having forgotten everything except the loss of Alphonsus.

“Ah, my poor brother!” cried Maria. “The Germans told us that the French soldiers would cut off his arms and make sausages of them. They said that all children ——”

“Nonsense, Maria!” interrupted Amélie.

"You know that the arms of children would not make good sausages. That is very foolish."

The night wore on. The train stopped at several stations; but Amélie saw no reason why she should get out to ask the way back to Dieppe. She felt safe anywhere in France, and it would be time enough to look after her own affairs when she had found Alphonsus Schmidmeyer. Shortly after dawn the train stopped at a small station crowded with soldiers. The passengers were asked to alight; the cars were needed for the troops. Amélie demanded of the guard how they could get to Dieppe. He was very polite, but he did not know. To Havre, then? There might be a train; when, he did not know; the service was entirely disarranged.

"Conduct me," Amélie said with great dignity, "to the commander of the soldiers."

The guard looked doubtful; Amélie had a franc piece ready.

"Come this way," he said.

Amélie adjusted her hat, asked Bertrand to come, ordered Mrs. Schmidmeyer to take charge of the luggage, and followed the guard to the railway station. On the bench against the wall were five or six officers. Their colonel was seated in the middle of the room, looking at a

map. In the corner, covered by a blanket, was a mastiff and a small boy, both asleep.

"A young lady wants to see you," announced the guard.

"Yes," said Amélie, her eyes sparkling at the sight of the uniform. "I am the young lady, and you must send me to my friends at Havre."

The colonel looked up, amused; the other officers smiled. Bertrand, who had a way of talking as if he were reciting from one of his beloved prize books, said:

"You laugh at a daughter of a soldier of France!"

The officers on the bench were convulsed with laughter; and, indeed, Bertrand, drawn up to his full height, uttering this reproach in a tragic voice, was amusing.

"And are you the son of a soldier of France?" asked the colonel, twirling his mustache.

"A descendant of the Crusaders, sir, and the son of Captain de Value."

"La! la!" exclaimed the colonel. "You are fierce, young man! You should not try to fight us other poor soldiers of France. I know your father, and I have often heard the great Vaucou-
bert sing at Mass." And he laughed.

"We have lost Vaucoubert. He has ceased to be under our protection."

All the officers rose and bowed; it was a bit of comedy after their long night march.

Bertrand bowed, too. He was quite at home with soldiers.

"So you want to go to Havre? You are not entirely alone?" asked the colonel. "How many of you are there?"

Before Amélie could answer, the child in the blanket uttered a cry. Amélie turned her head.

"There is a lost child?"

"Yes," answered the colonel. "Its mother can not be found. The dog also is lost."

"Phonse,—Alphonsus!" called Amélie.

The child jumped from under the blanket and ran to her.

"There are seven of us, Monsieur le Colonel," said Amélie. "This child is also of our party,—his mother goes with us."

"There is an older woman with you, then?"

The colonel was much relieved. He had been worried at the thought of the children of his comrade, Captain de Value, wandering through the country, unprotected, in these troubled times.

"Chicon," he said, "you will find room in the big automobile for these people. The packages

and the dispatches ought to go to Havre to-day."

Chicon, a young lieutenant, rose and saluted. The small child clung to Amélie's hand. The friendly voice and the English speech had attracted him.

"Is there anything else we can do for you?" asked the colonel. "I am glad that you have a good woman to take care of you. What is her name?"

Amélie was too discreet to utter a German name. Bertrand began:

"Madame ——"

"It is hard for us French to pronounce," interrupted Amélie. "She is an American."

"That is well," answered the colonel. "And, Chicon, see that there is some milk added for your passengers; and take this young lady and her brother, with the child, to the worthy woman who awaits them. I will report the matter to Captain de Value."

The little Alphonsus held tight to Amélie's hand. They found Mrs. Schmidmeyer waiting anxiously. She might well be anxious. There appeared to be no other train; she could not make herself understood, and she was desperately afraid that she might be detained as a German.

But her joy was great when Amélie appeared with the little boy. She could see nothing after that but her own dear child. Bertrand rubbed his eyes, and the Schmidmeyer children shouted with joy.

"The Americans," said Amélie, loudly, "are very fond of their children."

"The Americans adore their children!" repeated Bertrand.

The soldiers showed great interest.

"They are Americans? La! la! la!" said the soldiers.

Amélie felt that she had made her point. Now, at least, there would be no question of her party being Germanic.

The big automobile drew near; it was grey and grim. Chicon, in his neat uniform, took his place, accompanied by a soldier; two other soldiers mounted at the back, and the party started. Alphonsus, the recovered treasure, began to weep; he tried to wriggle out of his mother's arms. He wanted to go to Bébé, the big dog, that stood yelping in a sad way.

"Bébé, Bébé!" cried Alphonsus.

"The American child has a good heart," Chicon said, "but we can not take the dog."

Alphonsus was inconsolable.

The drive was not especially interesting. They rushed through the air. Poplar trees, farm-houses, church spires seemed to whiz past them. Mrs. Schmidmeyer had no eyes except for her newly recovered child. The other children were very sleepy; and Amélie, who was tired herself, listened patiently to Bertrand's imaginary stories of how they would find their father at Havre, and how they would greet him, and how pleased he would be to see them looking after these poor Americans. Bertrand assumed great airs of protectorship, and he made the soldiers laugh.

"If my father were general in the army," he announced, "he would make the enemy fly. When you see my father in his uniform, you are almost afraid; but, then, when you know him, you don't feel that way."

Carl Schmidmeyer, the eldest of the Americans, was very silent. He did not understand the lively prattle of Bertrand, or why roars of laughter should follow his speeches. He and Amélie exchanged a few words; but Carl was inclined to think that Amélie was too self-opinionated for a girl. He had discovered that she was a year younger than himself. Besides, she was French, and Carl's German grandmother

had filled his mind with stories of the great German Fatherland. When Amélie said one or two things about the soldiers of France and the splendor of their military achievements, Carl made a sharp reply.

"You forget," said Amélie, with dignity, "that you are protected by French soldiers."

"I do not forget the country of my father."

"Then," responded Amélie, "remain American."

Carl's ruddy face flushed to the roots of his blond hair.

"*You* are not much of an American!" he said.

"I am not American."

"Your mother was."

"That does not make me American."

"Why not?" exclaimed Carl. "Why not? *I* should be ashamed to be anything else."

"You talk like a German, and yet declare that you are an American! You must be one or the other. I am French because my father is French. When my mother married a Frenchman she ceased to be an American."

"How terrible!"

"It is always so. If I should ever marry—as I will not," said Amélie, calmly, "for there will

be nobody to marry but Americans where I am going,—I should be an American.”

“Is that the law?” asked Carl. Then he colored from annoyance. Think of asking for information from a little French girl! “Oh,” he went on hastily, “I suppose I knew, but I must have forgotten! Is that the law?”

“My mother said that it is the law. I may remain years in America; Bertrand may even grow up there; but when my time comes to choose an American husband I shall not do it; I will become a Mother Superior of a convent. I shall always be French.”

Carl was awed by this. Amélie had the air of knowing her own mind. He pondered for some time in silence over the statement, and felt very thankful that he could never become a Frenchman by marrying anybody.

Mrs. Schmidmeyer was so rejoiced at the return of Alphonsus that she could find no words to express herself. She could only press Amélie's hand from time to time and say:

“I will be a mother to you, my dear! You have given me back my child.”

Amélie could not understand why she said this. She could not see why Mrs. Schmidmeyer should thank her merely for finding Alphonsus.

It had been easy; anybody might have found him.

After a while Carl began to grow anxious. He told Amélie that they might run into a wire fence at any time. The Germans had put up wire fences, into which the automobile might crash. The barbs would cut the tires, and their journey would end. He himself had seen their wire fences. He had even seen an aeroplane, and the soldiers had told him that bombs had fallen from it. It was a French aeroplane; when it appeared, all the people had gone into their cellars.

"It is the only way," Carl said. "If a Zeppelin or an aeroplane should appear, we must get out of the automobile and make for a cellar. We saw many terrible things as we came on,—houses without roofs and dead horses. But a girl should not hear of these things."

"If my father is in the war and sees them, I am not afraid of hearing about them," said Amélie. "Oh, I know how terrible war is! Nobody can tell me."

"I could tell you."

Carl thought of some of the awful sights he had seen, and shuddered. He had loved the sound of the drum, the flash of the swords, and the waving of the plumes. What a joy it had

been to see a regiment passing to the sound of one of Sousa's marches, to see the flags waving in the sunlight, to see the beautiful movements of a thousand men—all as one! How fine the life had seemed to him! But now it did not seem so fine; he had seen too much on his way from the Fatherland. He was glad that he was an American and at peace.

"But if your country had to fight, you would fight," said Amélie.

"I pray that my country may not have to fight. Until it must fight, I will not think of it. And, if I am once able to take my mother and the children home in safety, I shall be happy."

Amélie looked at Carl's round face with new interest. "He is not afraid," she said to herself, "but he does not, like me, come of a family of soldiers."

IV

AN UNEXPECTED TELEGRAM

AT last Havre was reached. There had been alarms; the automobile was stopped several times. Amélie did all the talking, and the party was at last deposited at the hotel named by Madame la Brune. The escort drew off, with many compliments to the brave young soldier, "Capitaine Bertrand," who had, by his serious belief in himself, amused them very much. When the precious Alphonsus had been put to bed, Mrs. Schmidmeyer tried to make everybody comfortable. And, after a short time, spent in nervous restlessness occasioned by the long voyage, there was silence. It was understood that "La Lune" would sail in two days.

"Two days left in France! Only two days!"

Amélie went to sleep with tears in her eyes. How she loved her dear country! How she longed to see it in daylight again! She dreamed that her father had kissed her and said good-night. She awoke in the darkness; she could hear the clock on the marble mantelpiece sound-

ing the hour of one. No, he was not there; she might never see him again. How terrible the ocean seemed! And yet there was a good God, and His Mother in heaven, and her mother. Yes, she knew that they heard her prayer. If God willed it, even the ocean could not keep her from her father.

In Havre, Mrs. Schmidmeyer became more conscious than ever of her German name. Fortunately, her passport was in good order; otherwise, she would have been put down as a German subject. War is cruel at the best; and the innocent, simply because of their names, are often made to suffer. "Schmidmeyer," to the authorities at Havre, stamped this anxious woman and her children as the enemies of France.

Once or twice, when she spoke English in the street (it was necessary to do a little shopping), she was accused of speaking German, as she had been blamed for speaking English in Germany. Amélie was quite ready with her explanation, however; and Bertrand invariably added:

"These Americans are protected by a son of a soldier of France."

In Carl's opinion, Bertrand was a nuisance, especially as he occasionally put on airs and

people seemed either touched by his speeches or amused. Happily, Carl could not understand them. He would no doubt have objected to being "protected" by a small boy. If Amélie had been easily frightened, she would have been kept in a state of terror by the stories she heard.

All steamers were crossing the Atlantic without lights, so great was the fear that German cruisers would capture them. But, on the other hand, she was assured that the English ruled the seas, and that all French vessels were safe. Then there were mines. "Oh, yes," the hotel-keeper said, "there are the mines! But in time of war there must always be mines, and one must take chances. German submarines might even come to Havre,—who knows?" The porter audibly pitied the poor children obliged to face the horrors of the deep.

"For my part," he said, "I could endure the thoughts of mines, but I fear the sharks. The American coast is infested by man-eating sharks and alligators. And, inland, there are tigers."

This speech was translated for Carl. He only jeered.

"And the terrible sky-scrappers."

Amélie translated for the porter, who stood hat

in hand, very politely waiting to see the effect of his speeches on the young people.

"Yes," said Carl, scornfully, "big birds that scrape the sky."

Amélie dutifully translated this.

"How horrible!" said the porter.

"He's a fool!" exclaimed Carl, angrily, turning his back.

Amélie did not translate this.

"No," she said, "he is not a fool. Because you can not explain things to him in his own tongue, do not call him a fool. I do not know what you mean by sky-scrapers, unless they are birds."

"Oh, everybody ought to know what a sky-scraper is!" Carl said scornfully.

Vaucoubert did not turn up, though the people at the hotel were expecting him; nor did Madame la Brune come to see the children off. There was a telegram at the hotel, sent from Dieppe; it announced that her daughter Louise was dying, and that she could not leave her. It was evident that Madame la Brune believed that Vaucoubert was with the children.

The day of the sailing of "La Lune" came. The steamboat tickets for Vaucoubert and the De Values had been bought; their luggage checks

awaited them. Now came Mrs. Schmidmeyer's chance to repay part of her obligation to Amélie. She did everything she could to make them comfortable. She had a stateroom arranged for Amélie next to her own.

Bertrand, who might have been lonely, was put into the room with the Schmidmeyer boys; and Amélie, now a little frightened by the novelty of the situation, was very grateful. Mrs. Schmidmeyer was rather annoyed to find that the children's tickets were for New York only. She hoped that the railway tickets had been taken, too. She consoled herself with the belief that their uncle's address would be found on their trunks and boxes. She asked the deck steward, and he promised to make inquiries.

"I beg pardon, ma'am," he said, "but it is a mistake. The De Values' trunks have gone off on 'Le Soleil,' which has already sailed. It is all right, ma'am. You'll find them in New York."

Mrs. Schmidmeyer was obliged to content herself with this; but she was greatly worried. At the same time she consoled herself by thinking that the children would be met by somebody in New York, or that the address on the boxes in "Le Soleil" might settle it.

The party were ascending the gangway. The band was playing. Mrs. Schmidmeyer was in advance, with Bertrand and her own children. Amélie, with her precious box, had stopped to buy some bunches of autumn flowers from a little boy. She listened while the boy told her that his father had just returned wounded, and that he must sell flowers to buy bread. Amélie, interested as usual in other people, heard the last gong sound. She hurried away to ascend the steps, when the porter from the hotel rushed forward and placed a telegram in her hand. She read:

“Your father wounded at Senlis. I will care for him. He sends his blessing.—Vaucoubert.”

For the moment everything became black about her. She heard Mrs. Schmidmeyer calling from the deck of “La Lune”:

“Come! The steamer will leave in an instant!”

And then she heard nothing.

When she saw and heard again, she was lying against a bag of grain on the dock, and the porter was fanning her with his cap. She could hardly speak.

“Go,” she said to the porter,—“go, for the sake of the good God! Go and bring Bertrand, my brother, back. I can not say more. Oh, it

is terrible! Go, bring him to me! He must not leave. We must go to our father."

She heard nothing, saw nothing. Again there was a blank. She knew only that she was in a cool, gloomy space, alone. When her senses were restored, she found herself in the arms of a kindly woman. The sea breeze blew on her face, but she felt very weak. The telegram was still clutched in her hand. The porter was beside her, and near him was the small boy, with the bunches of dahlias and blue asters.

"Do you bring Bertrand?"

"No," said the porter,—he pointed hopelessly to the sea. "I reached the deck, but the officer turned me back. I could only say, 'Tell Bertrand de Value to write to Senlis, if he can write'; then I was obliged to descend. I was pushed down by the great crowd."

Amélie was appalled by the magnitude of this misfortune. Then she recovered herself.

"Thank God for that!" she said at last. "Bertrand is in good hands, and I am now free to help my father."

The porter and the good market woman and the boy with the dahlias looked very solemn.

"I did my best," said the porter.

"I know," answered Amélie. "Now take me

back to the hotel. I must do *my* best. Ah, poor father!"

The porter put his cap up before his face, the market woman wiped her eyes with her apron, and the boy wept above his flowers. Amélie suddenly recovered her sense of "deportment."

"Porter," she said, "buy all these flowers for me, and give them to the good woman, with my thanks. And now help me to the hotel."

The porter, much moved, gave the great bunch of flowers to the market woman, who kissed them, saying:

"I will give them to my granddaughters,—dear little ones, who also have a father in the war!"

Back in the room at the hotel, Amélie sent for some luncheon, having first said her prayers. Then she went to bed, and slept.

"Père Chalais has always said: 'When you have eaten and slept, then think.'"

And she obeyed this wise precept.

* * * * *

On board "La Lune" there was consternation when Mrs. Schmidmeyer made known the fact that Amélie had been left behind. When Amélie had fainted, the porter and the market woman had carried her to the pile of grain bags, out of

sight of anybody on the deck of the steamer. Then the porter had barely time to leave his message and to get ashore before "La Lune" started. The captain was very much concerned, but he could do nothing, as he had been so busy that Mrs. Schmidmeyer could not see him until the ship was well under way. After all, the child was at home in France, and her people would probably send her over on the next voyage of "La Lune."

Bertrand was most unhappy when he realized that Amélie had remained at home. He had never before been among strangers, and he had always been very dependent on Amélie, in spite of his proud boasts of independence. All of a sudden he felt that he was deprived of her support, of Madame la Brune's assistance, of Père Chalais' direction, and of his father's protection. He stood on the deck, a desolate boy indeed. He was told that Amélie had stayed at home, because she wanted to go back to her father; a telegram had determined her to go to seek him at Senlis. This did not at all comfort him. She was gone,—that was enough; and he was left with these strange Americans, whose language he could not understand.

Captain Grandcourt assured him that, if a

cable asking for him reached New York, he might return to France, and Bertrand hoped that there would be such a cable. He stood on deck for a while, trying to look like the son of a Crusader, and of a French soldier; but he could not long endure the strain. He rushed down to his berth, and, with his head under the bedclothes, sobbed and groaned without restraint. His loneliness was unbearable. He seemed to be deserted by the world,—his own beloved world,—the world he knew. He heard the door of the stateroom open; it was Carl, no doubt! What was Carl to him? Why should he care for Carl? He buried his face deeper, and wept more unrestrainedly.

“Ah, dear child!” said a soft voice, speaking in French. “Do not cry! Any boy would suffer, even the bravest,—and you are brave, I know. I hear that your wicked sister ran away and left you.”

Bertrand raised his head; he did not look at the speaker.

“Go away, Madame or Mademoiselle!” he said in a choking voice. “You are not needed here. My sister, Mademoiselle Amélie de Value, is *not* wicked.”

“Then,” asked the soft voice, evidently satis-

fied with the effect it had produced, "why did she run away?"

"Excuse my impoliteness, Madame or Mademoiselle; but is it your affair?"

"I am Madame Simon. If thou wilt tell me why thy sister ran away, I shall perhaps not think that she is wicked."

"I am not 'thou' to you, when I do not know you," replied Bertrand, growing angry. "You are impolite to address me as 'thou.'"

"I excuse myself. Will Monsieur be so kind as to tell a fellow-passenger why Mademoiselle his sister ran away? Mademoiselle must be wicked to flee from her dear little brother."

Bertrand straightened, and sat up on the side of the berth, facing the stranger. He had been told never to speak to strangers, beyond answering ordinary questions; he had been warned not to accept overtures of friendship from persons unknown to his friends; but here was a woman asserting that the beloved Amélie was wicked! She must be answered. The woman who stood in the stateroom had blue eyes and very golden hair; a soft white silk dress fell about her; she had no hat, and her golden hair was, in Bertrand's opinion, very beautiful. She held in her hand a large bunch of black grapes.

"I thought that perhaps you would like these?"

"I do not care to eat, Madame."

"Pardon me!" she said. "I have intruded. But I thought I heard—a man groaning."

Bertrand was appeased.

"It was I," he said. "My sister has gone to my father, who is a soldier of France, at Senlis."

"And you?"

Bertrand hesitated. 'Surely there could be no harm in telling anything to this lady, with the golden hair on her head and the grapes in her hand. Still, he hesitated; he had been told so often not to talk about his affairs to strangers.

"I am alone, except for the kind woman who takes care of me," he answered impulsively. "Madame Schmidmeyer will conduct me to my relative in America."

"Where?"

"I do not know. We shall know when we arrive."

The woman looked at him curiously; he was a slim, graceful boy, with something very attractive in his face when he was interested.

"Alone?" she said thoughtfully. "Well, good-bye! I will leave you. To-morrow my husband will teach you to play shuffleboard or

quoits on the deck. You will have a pleasant time during the voyage, I am sure."

"A nice lady!" Bertrand thought, when she had gone. "There can be no harm in telling her about myself, though Madame la Brune would not have liked it."

He forgot his grief in trying to write a long letter to Amélie with his new fountain pen. It was like talking to her. And when he had half finished the letter, he felt much better. After all, the voyage could not last forever. Amélie would join him in America; and perhaps his father, having set the German army to flight, would himself come over to see the new country, and to protect its unhappy inhabitants from the red Indians.

Mrs. Schmidmeyer was most kind to Bertrand; he got on very well with the three small children, too; but between him and Carl was a perpetual feud. He picked up a few words of English, and he soon understood some of the words Carl applied to him.

"Ivory top!" Carl called out, when Bertrand failed to score in a game of baseball on deck. "You've got molasses in your arms for muscles."

Madame Simon kindly translated these phrases for Bertrand; and they hurt him. It must be

admitted that Carl was rough. Bertrand, accompanied by Madame Simon, sometimes sang in the afternoons just before dinner. He had a very sweet voice, with a note of pathos in it that made the ladies cry. He could dance, too; he knew Scotch reels and the minuet and some Russian dances; he was not bad at shuffleboard and quoits.

One afternoon, when Bertrand had finished a song, and then, with much grace and fire, recited a passage from Racine, Mrs. Schmidmeyer tried to induce Carl to recite "Curfew" or "Der Erbkönig."

"Begin, Carl," she said. "You used to know it,—

"Wer reidet so spät durch Nacht und Wind,
Es ist der Vater mit seinem Kind."

"I haven't any parlor tricks," answered Carl. "I'm not a monkey, like Bertrand."

"Carl" (his mother was angry), "I forbid you to talk that way! When one person speaks of another in that manner, it shows that he is envious and jealous."

Carl's face flushed.

"What! Envious of a little French whippersnapper like that?"

“Yes. In this world, evil-speaking is always the result of envy. Examine your conscience and you will find that out. This orphan boy does some things that you can not do well; you do things that he can not do; be content to admire him. I will not punish you; I leave you to your conscience.”

V

BERTRAND'S ARRIVAL IN AMERICA

HAVING been scolded by his mother, Carl stalked off, to sit in a corner on the deck and look sulky; but he was forced to admit in his own heart that he had been wrong. It was too late to amend the harm he had done; Bertrand disliked him and avoided him, taking refuge with the Simons. Mr. Simon was a tall, thin man, with a heavy mustache, who spoke French with an accent of the South. His eyes were shifty; he never looked anybody in the face, and he could not talk even to a stranger without putting his hand caressingly on that person's arm. Bertrand thought he was very kind, and, though he was polite to the Schmidmeyers, he was always in the company of the Simons. The boy had been taught not to laugh at other people. His father had said many times: "It is unworthy of a gentleman to laugh at his friends behind their backs." Now, Mrs. Schmidmeyer was his friend,—he knew that; and yet, whenever Madame Simon made fun of her simple ways, Bertrand

laughed. From the first, the Simons tried to make Bertrand despise the Schmidmeyers. Captain Grandcourt shook his head; "If that boy's papers were not in such good order, I should take him back to France; I do not like those Simons."

Madame Simon would point out some mistake in manners at the table: "Carl Schmidmeyer makes a noise when he eats his soup. It is easily seen that he is of a low family." Then Bertrand would smile. Or: "Madame Schmidmeyer has never eaten an artichoke before. See! She is chewing the leaves as a hare nibbles at cabbage. She does not dip the soft end in the sauce as polite people do!"

As Bertrand was placed next to Madame Simon at the table (she had contrived that herself), this kind of talk was heard by him very often.

Bertrand gradually avoided the Schmidmeyers. Their kind mother was deeply hurt. It depressed her to see that the little French boy laughed at her and her children. Her distrust of the Simons was increased when one day the captain said to her:

"I advise you not to let the young Bertrand de Value be so much in company with those

Simons. I know nothing about them, though they have crossed several times with theatrical troupes on my boat. I suspect they are people without character; I know they borrowed money from people and that they did not pay. I have telegrams from Havre,—wishes,—assuring me that the boy will be safe with you, until his uncle meets him; otherwise, I should detain him at Ellis Island, and have him sent back.”

Further than this Captain Grandcourt would not go.

Mrs. Schmidmeyer begged Carl to be especially kind to Bertrand, and she spoke to some other American boys; but there was the barrier of languages, and the Simons had flattered Bertrand so greatly that he looked down on Carl. He found Mr. and Madame Simon more delightful than anybody else, because they told him only pleasant things. Many times Madame Simon remarked: “I wish you were my son, you are so clever and so handsome. How beautifully you speak that fable from La Fontaine, the Fox and the Crow!” Bertrand imagined that he loved the Simons. He did not love them; he loved the flattery they gave him.

The voyage wore on. “La Lune” was not stopped; it did not touch a mine, though one was

drawn up by the crew. Bertrand was not sick even for a single day, though the whole Schmidmeyer family went below for forty-eight hours,—thus missing the sight of an iceberg and a whale.

The little Schmidmeyers were, however, consoled by some porpoises, and delighted by a wonderful rainbow. The passengers craved for more news of the war than even the wireless could give. There was music in the salon at night, in which Bertrand took part; and the most delicious things to eat,—ices every day, if you wanted them. To Bertrand, brought up to eat cakes and ices only on birthdays and other great festivals, this was a paradise.

At last the voyage was nearly over. “La Lune” passed the Statue of Liberty. Bertrand took off his hat and said:

“A gift of France!”

The captain had more news from Madame la Brune; he was reassured. Besides, Mrs. Schmidmeyer made the proper affidavit;—he could always find her. Mr. Schmidmeyer was well known at the office of the steamship company.

Mrs. Schmidmeyer began to grow more and more anxious. She felt the responsibility of having to take care of Bertrand. Suppose nobody should meet the boy on the wharf? What could

she do? Of course she might reach Captain de Value by cable; but who could be sure of that, in these troubled times? She could not think of letting Bertrand be sent back. Besides, she could always find Captain Grandcourt.

Bertrand had been very liberal in tipping the stewards and waiters; for Amélie had pinned five hundred francs to the inside of his jacket before he left the hotel. She had sagely said to herself that she would not put all her eggs in one basket, so she had divided the thousand francs she carried in her blouse. As soon as the Simons discovered that Bertrand had money, they promptly borrowed what was left when he had distributed his fees.

The great steamer went slowly into its dock. Bertrand stood with the Schmidmeyers near the rails. Captain Grandcourt came and shook hands with them. "If there is any trouble, I will take Bertrand back," he said, "unless this should be the last boat."

Mrs. Schmidmeyer hoped that a cablegram might come from Vaucoubert or De Value, and one arrived. This was from Captain de Value to Mrs. Schmidmeyer: "Keep Bertrand with you until his uncle comes. Do not send him back."

Bertrand was absorbed in the interesting sight of the waiting crowd. He held his bag in one hand, and kept one foot on his pigskin box.

Suddenly Mrs. Schmidmeyer and Carl gave out a call of delight. The gangway was down, and a tall, yellow-whiskered man began to ascend; his face beamed.

"Father!" exclaimed Carl.

Mrs. Schmidmeyer and the children made a rush toward him; he was in the act of showing the paper he held, which was a special permit from the French Consul. During the delay the passengers began to land,—the Custom House officers having already held their consultation with them in the dining-room. Mr. Schmidmeyer continued to walk up the gangway, with his family's attention fixed on him.

Bertrand stood on the outside of the happy groups that surrounded him, as he reached the deck,—feeling lonely and forgotten. All the preliminaries were finished, and the Schmidmeyers, followed by Bertrand, reached the pier.

"Come," said Madame Simon, softly,—“come, Bertrand,—come with us. Leave these barbarians.”

Bertrand hastily picked up his box and followed Madame Simon. He obeyed his first

impulse. A moment later he regretted his action. What would Amélie say? It was ungrateful to desert the kind Mrs. Schmidmeyer in this way, and the little children had been kind to him. Of late, Carl, too, had been fairly nice. It was too late to run back,—too late,—that is, he was afraid of the laughter of Madame Simon. Those who laugh at others fear most to be laughed at. The tables can always be turned, if one cares to do it. Rather than be laughed at, Bertrand stifled his sense of decency and gratitude. He allowed Madame Simon to push him before her, through the crowd, on the pier.

He passed the happy Mr. Schmidmeyer, and thought that he had such a nice face. He was almost inclined to drop his bag and seize the hand of this kind-looking man. But, then, the Simons might laugh. Many times later he wished with all his heart that he had done the right thing, and let them laugh. Laughter soon passes, but the disregard of laughter for the sake of doing right gives constant contentment.

The Simons rushed to where their trunks were piled up under the letter "S." Mrs. Simon gave all her keys to the inspector, who opened and examined Bertrand's baggage, too; and by the time Mr. Simon returned, the way was clear.

Bertrand followed the Simons to a taxi-cab; and in a few minutes he was whirling up the most magnificent street in the world—Fifth Avenue. You may talk of “Unter den Linden,” or the “Avenue de l’ Opera”; but “Fifth Avenue” is the grandest of all!

When Mrs. Schmidmeyer turned to look for Bertrand, it was too late. Then she reproved herself for, in her joy, forgetting him.

Madame Simon told him he was stupid when he said he had thought that these wonderful skyscrapers were birds. He had never seen anything so wonderful in his life as this glimpse of the magnificent city of New York, except once when he had been in Paris for a day or two.

The Simons were too busy now with their own conversation to take much notice of Bertrand. The taxi-cab turned into a side street. Bertrand looked up at Mr. Simon, and asked:

“What can I do here in this big city?”

He felt lonely for the moment.

“Earn your living!” Mr. Simon responded, with a sarcastic laugh. “That’s what we brought you here for.”

Madame Simon echoed the laugh.

“Yes, you must work hard,” she said.

“Boys who eat must work.”

Bertrand did not like her tone; it sounded unusual, and he looked sulky.

"Why do you laugh at me, Madame? I must learn English in order to be useful here, is it not so?"

"It is *not* so. You need not know English in order to sing and dance."

"But that is not to work."

"For you it will be work—but here we are!"

The vehicle stopped before a high, dingy-looking apartment house. Bertrand's spirits sank. Should he be expected to live in this gloomy place? A man in his shirt sleeves came out of the house and helped to carry in the trunks. He took Bertrand's bag and box rather roughly. Bertrand, accustomed to the amiable conduct of French servants, looked up at Madame Simon in surprise.

"You're in America now. Everybody's equal. There is no use of your talking about being a soldier of France over here."

And she laughed jeeringly.

Bertrand was shown into a little room very badly furnished.

"You can stay here until we send for you," Mr. Simon said briefly.

Bertrand wondered whether he had done

anything wrong, to deserve this change of manner.

Bertrand began a dreary existence in the gloomy little room. He was no longer petted by the Simons. They feared that the police would find them; they kept Bertrand in hiding. He could only look out on the crowded street. It was a mean street, where ash barrels stood, and peddlers yelled and children screamed. In the evening the street seemed alive with talking people; the stoops were crowded, but Bertrand was not allowed to play with anybody.

"We shall go to Montreal as soon as the season opens," Madame Simon said, on the Sunday morning after their arrival in New York. "You are to play the little Prince in the operetta my husband has written. We shall go to the costumer this morning."

"I will go to church," said Bertrand, firmly. He had become angry in his heart with these people, and he despised himself for having allowed them to deceive him. As he had no money, he could not run away, though he was determined to do so as soon as a chance came.

"You will *not* go to church," Madame Simon said viciously. "Church is not for poor boys who must earn what they eat."

Bertrand looked Madame Simon straight in her eyes.

“Do not think that I fear you or your husband. I have been too well brought up for that,” he said slowly. “Besides, I am a son of a soldier of France.”

“Oh, la! la!” Mr. Simon broke into mocking laughter. He sat, unshaven, at the breakfast table. “We have heard enough of the soldier of France.”

Madame Simon took up the laugh maliciously.

“I know now why you would not let me stay with the Schmidmeyers,” said Bertrand. “You wanted to make a slave of me. I am to be a singing boy in a travelling circus—for you—for you, children of the devil, who will not let me go to church!”

Mr. Simon rose, white with rage; he showed his teeth, and grinned at the boy.

“Now,” he said, “I will beat the life out of you!”

“Do!” cried Bertrand. “Then I can not sing. Do! I should rather be beaten to death than live like a slave.”

“Martin!” exclaimed Madame Simon, seizing the tattered sleeves of her husband’s dressing gown. “Do not touch him. I know your

temper. Remember, if you should disfigure his face, he will be useless to us; and it is almost impossible to find another boy with a voice like his."

Simon sat down at the table again.

"He deserves to be maimed for life, but I will spare him.—Remember, sir, you are in our power."

"I am also in God's power," said Bertrand.

"Be silent! You can not speak the language; nobody can understand you, and therefore none can help you. You must do what we say, or you will starve to death."

Bertrand laughed in his turn.

"If you starve me to death, you will have no singing boy. I will go to church, or I will not sing."

Bertrand stood up straight and eyed the pair fearlessly. Simon rose again, breaking one of the thick saucers.

"No! no!" screamed his wife. "Do not touch him! The fate of your new operetta depends on him. He seemed to be such a little fool!"

"Well, then, take the young saint to church," growled Simon; "and after that to the costumer's. But I shall be even with him yet."

Bertrand smiled; he won a victory. His spirits rose. He said to himself: "God will be with me if I do my best."

VI

A DANGEROUS MOMENT

THE Schmidmeyers were evidently not on her track, and Madame Simon prepared herself to go out,—her best hat, a little touch of paint here, a little touch of powder there. When she came back, smiling, she looked very pleasant. She was not the Madame Simon who had so easily deceived Bertrand.

Very reluctantly, she led Bertrand through the crowd in the church. Bertrand took out his prayer-book, and, for the first time in this new land, felt at home. The Mass is the same everywhere, he thought,—always it speaks the same language! “*Dominus vobiscum!*” said the priest, just as Père Chalais had said it. There was a choir of boys. Bertrand said to himself that he could sing as well as the leading soprano, and he knew the chant better; he prayed with all his heart that God would inspire him with a plan for his deliverance.

Mass was scarcely over when Madame Simon

took his hand and insisted on leaving the church. Bertrand had almost forgotten his troubles.

"Our religion is the same everywhere," he said; "but I miss the giving out of the blessed bread, as is done at home."

"I have no time for such things; poor people must work," she answered crossly. "We are late as it is; the costumer will be angry."

Bertrand was quick to see that, having gained one end, he might go further.

"I know that I am a slave, Madame Simon—that I am to be a little dancing monkey, by whom you will gain much money; and all because I believed you, and because you have taken my money, and because these Americans can not speak French. But I tell you that, if you do not let me go to church on Sunday, and if you imprison me in one room all day, I will sing flat." To Madame, it was an awful threat!

Madame stopped short, and shot fire from her eyes at him.

"You impudent little monkey!"

"You may call me what you please," Bertrand said. "I tell you frankly that, if I had money or could speak the language, I would run away. Besides, I do not know where my relative lives."

Madame Simon laughed. After all, it would

be better to keep the child in good humor. It was true, he had nowhere to go. Besides, Captain Grandcourt might put the Federal Officials on her track. The Officials were very expert, and she knew it. If she were arrested, Bertrand's presence must be made to seem accidental.

The costumer was also a Frenchman, who lived in the fifth story of a house in Twenty-Eighth Street. He was a silent old man. Nevertheless, Madame Simon took care that, when he talked, he should talk only to her. Several costumes were chosen from drawings made by Monsieur Vandrier. Bertrand hated to put on a costume of pink silk, with a large hat with plumes. There was lace at the wrists, and he was given a small dress sword, with a knot of pale blue ribbon at the belt.

"I will not wear it!"

"You must!" said Madame Simon, briefly. "You will wear it in the first act, when you dance in the gavotte."

"It is only fit for a girl to wear."

"It fits you well, Monsieur," said Monsieur Vandrier. "Go into the little room and try it on, with these beautiful azure silk stockings. In the second act, you wear the uniform of a hussar."

"That is better," said Bertrand. "But this!" he added contemptuously.

"On Wednesday the hussar uniform shall be ready." The old man saw at once that Bertrand might be moved by flattery. "And in the third act you wear a diamond crown, with a long mantle of white satin and ermine fur."

Bertrand's face flushed.

"I will not be a dressed-up monkey!"

"But," continued Monsieur Vandrier, "you change to the hussar uniform later, and ride across the stage on a real horse."

"Do I?" asked Bertrand, his eyes sparkling. "A real horse?"

"Yes," added Madame Simon, quite willing to slap Bertrand, but for the moment taking her cue from the old man. "You ride across the stage, leading the troop of hussars, and waving your sword; you will look beautiful."

"Madame has told me before that I was beautiful," said Bertrand, not looking at her. "Boys are never beautiful; that foolishness is for girls. I have read the fable of the Crow and the Fox. The crow had a piece of cheese ——"

"Stop!" said Madame Simon, angrily. "Stop, or I shall imprison you in a room and feed you on bread and water! Oh, if I could only ——"

"You can do anything you choose," said Bertrand, "except make me believe you."

Madame drew the old costumer aside.

"My nephew is a wicked child."

"A bold child, but graceful and clever. You will have to manage him. I will tell you that the Federal Officials are looking for a boy like this one: I saw it in the American paper. You know that you got into trouble about your last 'nephew.' The police took him away when you burned his hand as a punishment. And there was the one before him, whom you kept in the cellar until he caught a fever, and then, of course, he was of no use. But this one is capable of *anything*. His eyes sparkle; he will refuse to sing or he will burn your house down, if he takes it into his head to be free. He is capable of anything!"

Madame Simon sighed. She would have sighed more deeply had she known that Bertrand, with his quick ears, had caught this conversation, as M. Vandrier intended that he should.

"They are an ungrateful lot, these boys!"

"Pardon me, Madame!" the old man said. "But you can not blame them. You keep them in poverty, you make them work, and when their voices are broken or they become ill they are

turned away. I have often wondered that there could be such parents in the world, who would sell their children to you. The others were poor creatures: this one has spirit. He is a treasure, too. When he speaks, it sounds like music. Pray do not provoke him."

"Provoke him!" hissed Madame Simon. "I would like to break every bone in his body—and I will, too, when he is no longer useful. He is in our power; we can do what we will with him."

Bertrand was at a table looking at some pages of military costumes. The old man approached him, and whispered:

"You will wear the hussar uniform with grace, and I have done you a good turn. Keep up your spirit. I can do no more for you. I owe them money. The hussar cloak will be embroidered with gold."

"Yes, Monsieur," answered Bertrand, resolving not to be afraid.

That afternoon Mr. Simon drilled Bertrand in his part. He was very docile; and when it was found difficult to transpose one of the songs, Bertrand suggested Vaucoubert's little piece.

"Ravishing!" said Mr. Simon, sincerely. "What pathos! What simplicity!"

If I had all the roses
And all the eglantine,
And all the world encloses,
And all the stars that shine,—
I'd offer all these wonders
Before my Lady's shrine.

Bertrand had forgotten himself in the pretty little song. He saw the sea beach in the sun, Amélie and Madame la Brune, Père Chalais and Vaucoubert,—all the sweet things remembered of France. Then he stopped, and threw his head down on the piano and wept aloud.

"Ho! ho!" said Mr. Simon. "The baby cries! Go on with your piece, sir!"

Bertrand only wept louder.

"Go on with your piece!"

"Do what my husband tells you!" cried Madame Simon. "You idle boy!"

"I will not!" Bertrand raised his tear-stained face. "The Schmidmeyers are looking for me, and the American police. I know it! I will help them find me! I will go back to France."

"He will go back to France! Ah, yes!" echoed Mr. Simon. "He will not sing his music; he will not earn his bread; he will fly back to France! La! la! la!"

"I will not be mocked at; I will not stay in

your stuffy rooms, without air, in darkness. No, I can not do so when I think of France."

Simon raised his right hand menacingly.

"Be careful!" warned his wife. "He means much money to us; remember the police!"

"Well!" growled Simon, restraining himself, "I will not strike you."

"No," said Bertrand. "You know better. I am not afraid." And he did not seem afraid.

"Oh, wait—wait until your voice is broken and you are useless! Wait, and I will cast you out, to die, to be rubbish!"

Madame Simon interfered.

"You will wear your pretty pink satin dress on the stage, Bertrand, my young friend. All the world will admire you. Why, you will be as pretty as a girl!"

"As pretty as a girl! That I will never be!" stammered Bertrand. "I mock at your pretty pink suit. I will not be a pink monkey. I—I—never! You can starve me if you like; but I will not be a monkey, dressed like a girl."

"I will see," Mr. Simon spoke in a deadly calm tone, his eyes blazing. "Come!" He grasped Bertrand by the back of the neck and dragged him to the little storeroom where trunks and boxes were kept. "There!" he said, flinging the

boy in on the floor. "There! You shall starve, until you are willing to sing for your living."

"I will starve!" said Bertrand loudly, though his arm had struck the sharp edge of a box, and he felt pain, "but the police will find me!"

"Well, starve!" called out Mr. Simon, locking the door.

The twilight had fallen; the room was dark; the chill of disuse and the smell of dry rot were in it. Bertrand was obliged to lie on the bare floor until the pain in his arm had passed. His anger soon faded. He was a small boy; he was alone; he was tired; he was sad. There seemed to be no help on this earth for him.

These people could do as they liked with him. In all this great new country, he had not one friend. Red Indians and cowboys would have treated him no worse. Cowboys at least lived in the open air, and they could not have shut him into this horrible gloom, from which strange creatures might at any time come out. He could hear the sound of passing electric cars, and of voices and footsteps; but nobody except the Simons could hear him.

After a time he rose and went to the window. He heard Mr. Simon's voice saying outside the door:

"No,—not even a piece of bread. He shall starve to death."

"He wants me to hear that," thought Bertrand, "he is foolish; he will not starve me to death, for then I cannot sing."

The window was fastened firmly; and outside the panes was a shutter made of painted slats, tinted of a dusty green. He waited until he heard Mr. Simon leave the door. Then he tried the fastening of the window-sash. It was rusty, and when he moved it a little it made a loud squeaking noise. He turned away, discouraged. There might be some tools that he could use in the room. Trunks, boxes, an old umbrella, some boxes of wine, a half-filled crock of olive oil, a chunk of Parmesan cheese,—nothing else was there. He threw himself on one of the big trunks. He was trapped. He imagined himself a hare—he had seen one in his father's woods—caught by the leg between iron springs. He blessed himself, and murmured an "Our Father."

He took up the crock of oil. It was easy to pour some drops on the rusty fastening; after this it moved easily. The outer shutters were tied with rope. Bertrand felt in his trousers pocket for his penknife,—it was gone. Just then a footstep sounded outside the door. It was evi-

dent that somebody was listening. Bertrand softly lowered the window, which was now well oiled. The key turned in the lock, and Mr. Simon appeared in his dressing-gown and slippers; he carried a candle.

“Ah—ah!” he said. “I was right!” He noticed the crock on the floor, its cork lying beside it. “You are like a rat, eating our cheese and drinking our oil. Ah, my fine fellow, you will eat no more! You shall starve until you are reasonable. When your spirit is broken, then you may come out.”

Bertrand said nothing. Mr. Simon picked up the lump of hard cheese and the crock of oil, and left, locking the door very carefully. Bertrand was on his feet in an instant, and with his hands on the window-sash. He tried in his waistcoat pocket for his penknife: it was there. The hard knot of rope that kept the green shutters together was easily cut, but the hinges were so rusty that he could not move them. “Well, what if I do open them?” he asked himself. He would find himself many feet from the ground, appealing for help to people who could not understand him,—only to be put back into the hands of the Simons, and enslaved by them. He might just as well give up. “But—no!” he thought. “I

have prayed, and I have done my best, and the good God will not fail me."

His hands dripped with oil; he rubbed the rusty shutter hinges, and at last they softly turned, as he pressed against the shutters. He looked, not down into the twilighted street, but on the fire-escape,—“a balcony,” Bertrand called it to himself. It was filled by two earthen pots, in which the withered stalks of geraniums still stood, a roll of musty carpet, and a pair of old boots.

The boy was astonished to find that an old iron staircase led from the “balcony” downward. He had never seen a fire-escape before this. Cautiously he threaded his way to the top of the iron ladder and descended. Apparently, the fire-escapes were habitually used as means of descent by all the neighborhood tenants; for Bertrand went down unnoticed.

VII

AT CHOIR REHEARSAL

ONCE down, Bertrand easily made his way to the corner of the street. There he paused. Where should he go? He must find the Schmidmeyers. But how? This was a puzzle. The fresh air helped to give him courage. He wished he could ask, in English, of some of the many lounging or hurrying people, "Where does Mrs. Schmidmeyer live?" Somebody might know. Or, "Are you acquainted with my uncle Watson, in Ohio or Iowa?" If his uncle Watson was of a distinguished family—as he probably was, being related to the De Values,—this would be the easiest way. But he could only stand helplessly on the corner. And he had no hat!

He looked around him. There were many hatless boys running about. He felt his helplessness; and, hatless, he felt, too, that he was nobody; his self-respect was wounded. A star came suddenly from the clouds.

"I will go toward that star," he said. "Per-

haps my father and Amélie are looking at that same star."

He walked rapidly through the crowded streets, with the star before him. He stopped in front of a building which he seemed to recognize. Yes, it was the church where he had heard the singing boys. The front looked dark and silent. He walked up the flight of stone steps which led to the main entrance. The door—it had been open all day—was now closed. He walked down the steps very slowly, saying his prayer for help. How lonely it was in the dusk!

He was not afraid of Mr. Simon now; for he was in the free air, and he could run. Give a boy the use of his legs and a clear space, and there is not much he is afraid of. Standing on the lowest step, he was in great doubt. What could he do? Go to the *curé*? But the father might not understand French. He walked a little farther to the north, and noticed an alley which went between the church and what he supposed was the house of the priest.

At the end of this alley there were lights burning. He made for them at once. This might perhaps be the room of the choir boys. The door was open, and Bertrand saw two men near a piano; they were talking earnestly. The

younger was dark, with his thick black hair cut short, and a little clipped mustache; the other—Bertrand discovered when he had examined the room from his place in front of the door—was a young priest.

“It’s hot. Leave the door open,” said the priest. “I wonder that you do not go *mad*. Imagine listening to the discord of thirty boys all the afternoon! It is not an easy thing to conduct a boy choir.”

“They are imps!” answered the other man, with emphasis. “Such a motley lot came in answer to our advertisement, and not one really good voice. I have chosen two of rather poor quality. It is hard work. If I didn’t like music so much, I’d give it up.”

“Here’s another one!”

Bertrand stood, hatless, on the step.

“At least,” remarked the priest, “he is polite. The others were not, as a rule, ceremonious.” And he laughed.

“Oh, you may laugh!” returned the other, speaking slowly, as if unaccustomed to the English language. “Here’s another imp, true enough!—What do you want, boy? It is too late. I have had enough torture for one day. Come again. And put on your hat. Your polite-

ness, to which I am unaccustomed, frightens me."

"He has no hat," said the priest.

"It is not politeness, but necessity. Indeed I have no hat," murmured Bertrand, in French.

"Go! Go!"

Bertrand did not move.

"I want to sing," he said in French.

"It is too late," replied the young director of the choir. "I have had Italian boys, German boys, American boys, and Jewish boys, but you are the first French boy."

"Give me a chance, then, Monsieur, since you, too, are a Frenchman."

"Oh!" the director groaned. "Can't you come again? Go home! I am tired. Come on Wednesday at four or at seven o'clock. Go!"

The young man turned his back on the boy, and closed the piano.

Bertrand was desperate. He had great confidence in his voice, and he began the first song that recurred to him. It was Vaucoubert's:

"Si j'étais roi des diamants,
Et vous la reine des perles."

"What? Where did you learn that tune?"
The director seized Bertrand by the arm.

"Vaucoubert taught me."

"Vaucoubert? He is my uncle!"

"And you are Guy!" Bertrand threw himself into the arms of the young man. "You are Guy—Vaucoubert's Guy,—the great musician who has gained success in America! Oh, I am so glad! I am Bertrand de Value."

"Little Bertrand!"

Guy Vaucoubert was astonished.

"Father," he said to the priest, "the unexpected always happens."

"You mean that Providence directs things, and not we. Well, he is a nice little boy; and, judging from the way he took those notes, he has a voice. I'll leave you. I have a lot of accounts to make up. At last you have found a polite boy with a voice. If I can be of further use to you or your friend, the boy, let me know."

And the young priest left them.

"First, sing that song again," said Guy. "You and Vaucoubert and I alone know it. It was written for me. It will be sung in my opera."

Guy opened the piano and began the accompaniment; Bertrand sang the piece, half hymn, half song, to the end.

"Your voice is lovely, Bertrand. You shall come into the choir, if you will."

Bertrand began to tremble.

"O Mr. Guy," he begged, "hide me somewhere! The Simons will take me."

"Nonsense! Who are the Simons?" Guy tightened his lips. "For the moment you belong to me. You shall dine with me, and then I will take you home. Where's your hat? I can't see how you got into the grasp of those people. The Officials are most strict. A case like this has never occurred!"

"It was my own fault," said Bertrand. "The captain did all he could."

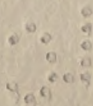
Bertrand's tears came in a flood; he hated to cry, but he could not help it. He put his arms about Guy's neck and told him the whole story.

"Don't cry! Just sing a little. That will make you forget—and me, too,—the wretches, the brutes! But we all know the reputation of those Simons, who escape the police simply because they are never in one place very long. But sing!"

Bertrand dried his eyes and sang:

"Si vous étiez la reine des roses!"

"Ravishing!" said Guy. "You *can* sing."



The words are not much—words never are,—but they remind me of home and my Uncle Vaucoubert. If he were here, I should never again laugh at his singing.”

Bertrand was irritated.

“He sings well.”

“Oh, that’s right,—stick up for him! You shall stay with me until I hear from your uncle. You need not fear; you shall not go back to the Simons. I will deal with them. Trust me!”

Bertrand was taken by Guy Vaucoubert to a small French restaurant in Eighth Street. It was like being in paradise, to hear his own language, to eat haricot beans and some omelette and chicken.

“To-morrow I will buy you a hat, and you must begin to speak English.”

“The Simons have all my clothes and my money.”

“Leave that to me.”

“Must I go to my uncle’s?” asked Bertrand, wistfully, as Guy prepared his bed. “I would like to stay with you.”

Bertrand slept very well that night on the sofa, in Guy’s big room in Washington Square. But before he went to sleep, he said his prayer

of thanksgiving; and Guy was glad to kneel with him.

Next morning, Bertrand did not awake until the sun was well up. He had been very tired, mentally and physically. Guy's Japanese servant brought him a large cup of coffee and a roll. Shortly after he had taken his bath in the big marble tub, Guy came in.

"Well, I caught them, bright and early. Your bag and box are on the way, and here's a hundred francs I forced them to give you. I suppose that's less than you lent them?"

"Oh, yes!"

"I thought so."

"But I'd be glad to be away from them, if they kept all the money. What's money to freedom?"

Guy laughed. "I'll have my coffee now while you dress, and then we'll talk."

Bertrand stationed himself in the window, while Guy ate his frugal breakfast: for, like most Europeans, he never had more than a cup of coffee and a roll in the morning.

"And now we must find your uncle, or great-uncle, or whatever he is."

"He lives in Iowa or Ohio. I think it is Ohio, as somebody told me that his place meant,

‘How do you do!’ in Japanese; and I think it is Ohio.”

“But where in Ohio?”

“In Ohio,” answered Bertrand. “That is probably the place. It will be easy enough to find.”

“Easy?” said Guy,—“easy? Ohio is a State, not a city or a town.”

“I understand, sir,” replied Bertrand,—“a province. But I am sure that any person related to my mother must be so distinguished that everyone will know him.”

Guy Vaucoubert laughed.

“You must learn English, geography, and the ways of this country.”

“I know the geography of Europe,” answered Bertrand, offended.

“That’s not enough. And now, until you find your relative—who may be a grocer, a farmer, a hardware dealer, or anything (everybody works here),—you shall practice your scales, sing in the choir, live with me, and be as happy as you can.”

Bertrand reddened and hesitated.

“But I must pay.”

“Oh, very well! I will give you something for your service in the church,—more, as you

sing better and better. That will pay me for the little room behind mine; and the hundred francs I have rescued from these robbers, the Simons, you shall keep for shoes and car fare. Tell me about the life at Mers,—what you did this summer, and about Père Chalais. Are the Des Arches still alive? Were there many people this summer? Who has the pink villa near the mayor's house? Is Lebrave still mayor? Now begin!"

It was nearly noon before Guy was content to drop the many subjects suggested by the little town in which he had spent so many happy summers with his uncle. Then Guy opened his big piano—the one luxurious piece of furniture his room contained—and put Bertrand through his musical paces. The piano was ornamented with beautiful angels (copied from those painted by Fra Angelico) on a ground of white enamel. Bertrand said that he had never seen anything so beautiful as a row of these angels glowing with gold, blowing trumpets.

"I ought not to own so costly a piano," said Guy; "but I can not sell it, as it was given to me. I shall tell you the story of it sometime. It is not good to have such lovely pictures

painted on the piano; they make you forget the music."

"Oh, no!" said Bertrand. "They make you think more of the music."

"I believe you have a musical heart."

"Certainly," answered Bertrand. "When I grow up, I shall play in one of the bands that make the soldiers march. That is my ambition. But I wish the general of the French army would let me play on his big trumpet, such as the angels have."

"At present," said Guy, "your business is not to think of playing big trumpets for the French army, but of singing at the High Mass on next Sunday, and likewise at Vespers. As an American citizen, I do not approve of your warlike ideas. You see, I love France; but, as I have been here for seven years, I have learned to love America first, and put her first."

"I will go to France at once" (Bertrand held himself very straight) "if people here will expect me to love America better. When I pay my respects to my relative I shall say: 'I will never be an American; do not expect it, Monsieur. Now that I have saluted you, let me depart.'"

"What is the name of this relative whom you

will salute in your best manner?" Guy asked, smiling.

"I do not know; Amélie knows. I think it is Watson."

"Watson,—somewhere in Ohio! My dear Bertrand, you will, I think, be obliged to stay a long time with me. I shall explain to the police, and make everything right. You can not go back to nurse your father in the trenches; you can not find this relative; you must remain with me, to learn to work. Work is the word here in the United States; so now we shall take the *O Salutaris* for Sunday. Thank Heaven that you have a good voice,—one of the best boy voices I have ever heard. With it you can praise God and earn a living. Try to be contented until you see your father and Amélie again."

"I will, Guy Vaucoubert," answered Bertrand. "But you will not force me to be an American?" Tears came into his eyes.

Guy laughed. "I might do worse. Now I will make you sing your hymn. Come! Here goes!"

After an hour's practice, Guy made an omelette on his small gas stove, and allowed Bertrand to fry some potatoes. Bertrand, who, unlike most French boys, did not disdain the art of cooking as "sissified," was glad to be of use.

When Guy praised his coffee, he began to believe that America was, after all, a rather cheerful place.

At the rehearsal in the afternoon, Bertrand was not at all nervous; he was never nervous when he sang. The young priest spoke to him in French, and the other boys looked at him doubtfully. One of them kindly whispered to him :

“Your squeak is not so bad, but you look like a dago.”

Bertrand took this for a polite salutation, and smiled. It was a long time before he was able to go into the street without looking behind him, for fear Mr. Simon might suddenly come up and seize him.

The Simons did not appear. Guy Vaucoubert knew much about their evil doings; and they had gone away from New York, in deadly fear of the police. Bertrand had been taught a lesson,—namely, not to talk freely to strangers. There was not much temptation to break this rule, as it was several weeks before Bertrand could speak ten words of English intelligibly. He practiced diligently, made great progress by working hard. “Nothing can be done without work,” Guy said, when Bertrand was inclined to remain outside

too long on the snowy days, with his sled. "The most beautiful voice is useless, if one does not work to cultivate it. A person that plays or sings merely by ear! How foolish!"

Bertrand learned to read and sing difficult music at sight. Guy, finding that he could make coffee, obliged him to make the best possible coffee. "Whatever you do, you must do well," was his motto. In the meantime nothing was heard of the relative in Ohio.

Just after the beginning of November, Bertrand had acquired enough English to go to school. At first he did not like the school, and he had a hard time. But soon he became reconciled to his lot, and devoted himself to his studies.

VIII

A SCHOOLBOY'S QUARREL

BERTRAND'S teacher pronounced him a "wonder" in mathematics, and anything but a "wonder" in the other studies; consequently, he was sent into a class of very big boys for arithmetic and algebra; but he spent most of his time with the smaller boys,—some much younger than himself.

Among the traditions of the school was one that a new boy must fight one or two other boys of his own size, in order to make his place secure. The smaller boys looked down upon Bertrand because he could not speak English well, and the larger pupils disliked him because he went steadily ahead of them all in mathematics; and when Brother Lucian suggested one day, as an incentive to the others, that he should go into the special class for geometry, his unpopularity was very great. Bertrand was not aware of this as yet.

It must be admitted that the boys in all the classes were, as a rule, well behaved in school.

The teachers insisted on what was called, in the report made out monthly, "Deportment"; and every week there was a short lecture on good manners and consideration for others. The young priest, who delivered the lecture after the weekly examination in religious doctrine, admitted, with a sigh, that probably his lecture might have great influence—in the future. Once outside the school, the "perfect" in "deportment" became what Bertrand called "savages"; and on one terrible day the boy who always stood "first" was arrested by the policeman for chasing a Chinese laundryman. There were others who had indulged in this sport, but only the "prize boy" was caught.

Brother Lucian loved mathematics; he cared very little about "deportment" in comparison with what the small boys called "sums." You might lean luxuriously on your elbows and murmur your calculations half aloud; you might even snatch your neighbor's lead pencil for temporary use, and be caught trying to remove black marks from your face with the sleeve of your jacket, provided you satisfied his taste in mathematics, or played baseball well in the vacant lot behind the school.

Brother Edward was tall and dark, with a

ruddy complexion and great muscles; he had the air of seeming to be asleep half the time, yet no important breach of discipline went unnoticed. He carefully looked after the class of smaller boys, of which Bertrand was one most of the time; and he valued "deportment" above everything except catechism. He was an Englishman, and he thought that baseball and the American football were not to be compared to cricket or a game he occasionally spoke of as "badminton." Hockey on the ice he liked, and he had promised to take the best of his class out to organize a hockey team as soon as the ice formed in the park.

Brother Lucian was thin and short, red-haired, and with brown eyes that had a tinge of red in them; and his "little lambs," as he called his pupils when he was not pleased, were really afraid of him; for there was a tradition in the school that red-haired people would do "anything to you." It is true that Brother Lucian ruled by fear; and, when one knew his class well, one felt that a tender and gentle love expressed fittingly would have astonished and inconvenienced the little flock, who did their best to please him.

Brother Lucian was never angry; but his

“lambs” were afraid he might be. Besides, when he was off duty, he could throw a ball marvellously well; and nobody in the school could discuss the faults and virtues of the great professional athletes as he could. Some of the boys had come to this school from classes taught by young women in other schools, and they found the atmosphere cold. They complained to their mothers. Their fathers, however, turned a deaf ear to their representations. It would be foolish to pretend that either Brother Lucian or Brother Edward was loved. Both were greatly respected; and, while there was a certain consideration shown to the stupid boys, the idle ones found life a burden.

One day Hopkins, the prize reader, who intended to be an actor, spoke with great feeling a “selected” passage:

“Jack, now an admiral in the Navy, who had fought many battles, thought of his old teacher. ‘How I loved him!’ he said. ‘How sweet and kind he was! Alas, if I had only worked harder for him! How I loved him!’”

This was read soulfully.

“Stop!” said Brother Edward, sternly. “Bosh! If anybody loves me, let him stand up and say so!”

"No, Brother!" answered a treble chorus, and nobody stood up.

This was felt to be a strange thing by some of the smaller boys, whose earlier days had been spent in the kindergarten. But it produced the effect the Brother desired, as he was strictly just,—and justice in a teacher covers a multitude of minor defects. It produced good results.

Brother Lucian had no favorites; the clever mathematicians were not, apparently, more beloved than these honest workers who had to be taught with great patience. His class was a paradise for the slow boys. They were not riddled with sarcasms,—weapons which chill the heart and benumb the head of the pupil who does not happen to be gifted with a talent for mathematics or anything else.

Bertrand's lessons in music were a great pleasure to him; and the lessons in "sums" were agreeable, too. But it was most disagreeable to be laughed at when he read "wiz" for "with," and "de" for "the."

"Why do you laugh?" he demanded. "I do not laugh at you."

This was in a small circle of the "kept in" after school, when discipline was relaxed.

"There is nothing but to laugh when you speak English," Shorty Jones answered.

"I might laugh at you sometimes, Jones, if I chose," said Brother Edward; "but I would think it ungentlemanly to do so."

"Ah, g'on!" murmured Jones.

"I think I caught that expression, though not intended for me. Your Bowery accent is deplorable. Your English is as bad as those Londoners of the lowest classes who speak of 'at' instead of 'hat,' and 'ead' instead of 'head.' You say N' Yo'k. Altogether, if you lived in a community where the habit of good English was cultivated, you would be put down as speaking a dialect."

Jones flushed.

"Excuse me, Brother!" he said. "But I ain't enough of an 'ivory top' to believe that anybody speaks better English than N' Yo'kers."

"Poor child!" responded the exasperating Brother. "But if I ever again hear you say 'faamily' for 'family,' or 'accént' for 'áccent,' I'll give you a bad mark. Now, go on, De Value, and watch your 'withs.'"

"I hate the English!" murmured Jones.

Bertrand went on, much refreshed. He tried

to watch his "withs," but his tendency was too strong toward "wiz." Nevertheless, there was only one giggle from Jones, and then Brother Edward promptly said:

"Gwan!"

"Which means *continuez*?" asked Bertrand, surprised by the interruption.

"It means, in good New Yo'k, 'Go on,' " said Brother Edward, shortly. Upon this, the class swore never to love the English.

When the informal exercises were over—the regular school exercises were anything but informal,—Brother Edward addressed the two boys who had been "kept in" because their method of reading was bad.

"Now," he said, "I want to tell you one thing. Don't laugh at other people until you are sure that you are beyond laughter yourself. You laugh at De Value's natural mistakes: suppose he should turn the tables by laughing when you, Richard Jones, say 'twict' instead of 'twice,' or 'drownded' instead of 'drowned'; or when William Rice says 'idear' instead of 'idea'?"

"I wouldn't care," retorted William Rice, sullenly.

"Oh, yes, you would!"

"Well, I might try to lick him," William Rice

admitted. "I'd like to see a foreigner like that laugh at *me!*"

"But you'd deserve it. You are trying to speak your native language, while he is trying to speak a language as foreign to him as Greek is to you!"

"Oh, g'on!" murmured Jones, under his breath. "Why, any child can speak English!"

"And any French child can speak French; but you can't say in French what the smallest child in France can say. And, then," continued Brother Edward, "you are always laughing at things you don't understand. You have always seen men wear their watches in their waistcoat pocket, with chains attached. The other day, old Colonel Cruss, an English friend of mine, came in to see the class. All went well until you boys noticed that he wore a little watch in a leather band around his wrist. The whole class giggled. Hopkins, never having seen an English soldier with a watch at his wrist, became actually red in the face, and I heard him say, 'Dude!' The fact is that the Colonel was one of the bravest soldiers in the Crimean war. He always wore his watch that way, because a fighting man or a drilling man, or a very busy man finds it easier to look at a watch on his

wrist than to dig into his pocket. I hope that you'll grow up to be like him. 'Dude,' indeed!"

The class filed out, not well pleased with itself, and especially displeased with Bertrand, who turned quietly toward Washington Square. He had gone only half a block, glad to be in the open air, singing a phrase from "Mignon," when he felt two arms thrust about his neck. He tried to turn, but the grasp tightened. Billy Rice was trying his new wrestling tricks, and Hopkins and Jones were watching maliciously. Bertrand had muscular arms and legs, and he kept upright, and tried to swing rapidly around. Billy Rice removed the grip from his neck to his chest. Bertrand made another violent attempt to throw him off. Billy was taller and heavier than Bertrand, who found himself crushed as in a vise.

"Ah," he said, almost choking, "you are a coward! You attack me in the back. Come, if you must! We will practice the box."

Bertrand's books fell on the sidewalk; another boy picked them up.

"He's right!" called out the new boy. "You don't give him a fair chance."

Bertrand's head was crushed against Rice's chest, and he could only gasp.

"Kick him in the shins!" exclaimed the new boy.

Bertrand, though ignorant of the meaning of the word "shins," did this very effectively. Rice, with a howl, pushed him away; and Bertrand fell, pained but triumphant, on a pile of sand near the curbstone. Rice rushed at him, applauded by Hopkins and Jones. Bertrand tried to get up, but Rice was upon him.

"This won't do!"

The new boy pulled Rice up roughly, kicked him twice, and then helped Bertrand.

"You can fight *me*, if you want to," said the new boy. "I'm your size. Here, youngster, hold these books—why, Bertrand Value!"

"Carl Schmidmeyer!"

Bertrand ran forward and kissed Schmidmeyer on both cheeks.

"My preserver!" he exclaimed in French. "I thank thee for saving me from these barbarians, who are neither gentlemen nor the sons of gentlemen!"

"Glad to see you, all the same!" said Carl, very much ashamed of this demonstration. "Where do you live? I'll walk with you; and if any of these 'ivory tops' attack you, let them do so. It would be just like taking popcorn from

a baby for me to fight any of them. Hear that?"

His scowl was dreadful; he looked big and red. And so Rice and the others called out, "Dago!" and fled.

Carl Schmidmeyer merely said:

"My mother will be glad!"

Bertrand blushed.

"I was not grateful," he answered in fairly good English. "I myself accuse."

"Oh," said Carl, "you're only a kid! Do you go to school there? I go across town. It's a better school. We don't jump on boys smaller than our size. Your school doesn't seem to have any principles."

This was beyond Bertrand.

"We're having a birthday party on Saturday,—the baby's," said Carl. "You come,—Sixth Avenue, near Twenty-First Street; up-stairs; four o'clock."

And Carl ran off, whistling.

IX

BRAVERY CONQUERS LONELINESS

BERTRAND forgot all about the recent fight, in the pleasant prospect of seeing Mrs. Schmidmeyer. His collar was torn, there was a scratch under his left eye, and one suspender was broken. Vaucoubert, who was waiting for him, pushed him toward the piano.

“The scales,—the scales!” he exclaimed. Bertrand opened his mouth, and ran up and down the scale.

“All right!” said Guy, much relieved. “I was afraid you had injured your throat. If you must fight, keep your voice safe. And by all means do not get a black eye. Mgr. Dawson will not tolerate a black eye in his choir.”

Bertrand ran to the little mirror and looked at his face carefully.

“Only a scratch!” he said joyfully. “I couldn’t help fighting, Monsieur Guy,—I really couldn’t. In truth, I didn’t fight: I was fought. But I have good news: I have found Carl Schmidmeyer!”

“You have? That’s good!”

Guy was pleased. The finding of the Schmidmeyers might lead to the discovery of Bertrand's "Mr. Watson." Perhaps they knew his address. He did not know how anxiously the Schmidmeyers had sought for him. Guy did not want to get rid of Bertrand: on the contrary, he was afraid that the lost relative might arrive and claim the boy before negotiations could begin. Guy believed that he might be able to induce Mr. Watson to help him pay for Bertrand's musical education and at the same time leave the boy in his hands. Until Mr. Watson should be found, Bertrand's future seemed to be uncertain. Such a case as the disappearance of Bertrand from an ocean steamer had never before occurred. It was well for the Simons that they had left New York.

"No more French, Bertrand. Except on Sundays, you must speak English, now that you are about to make some English-speaking acquaintances."

"All right! I am content,—I agree *wiz* you," said Bertrand. "I am invited to the Schmidmeyers' baby's birthday party."

"I will go, too,—to pay my respects to the amiable Mrs. Schmidmeyer."

"Oh, that will be—*ravissant!*"

“You mean delightful?”

“Delightful!”

Bertrand jumped about. He would see some people who had talked with his dear Amélie. He would confess to the kind Mrs. Schmidmeyer how ungrateful he had been.

“And, if you please, Monsieur Guy, may I take a gift?”

“It is your duty,” replied Guy.

“Then I will ask the baker in the next street to make for the Schmidmeyer little goat a beautiful ——”

“Little goat?”

“Yes; that is what Carl Schmidmeyer and the boys at school call a small child, is it not?”

“Oh, I see!” said Guy, laughing,—“a kid.”

“The dictionary says that it is a little goat,—a kid.”

Guy laughed again.

“Then, with your permission, I will give to the little kid a cake of St. Honoré, such as, in our family in France, we always have on our—our—our birthdays.”

Bertrand put his hand on Guy's shoulder, and tears ran out of his eyes.

“Oh, the birthday cake makes me so lonely! Shall I never see my father or Amélie or ——”

He choked, clinched his fist hard, wiped his eyes, and tried to look brave.

“No, no! I am the son of a soldier. And the good God will not let us be lonely forever.”

“You shall have your cake—and a big one!” Guy’s own eyes were moist: he, too, had known what loneliness meant.

“You make the coffee, and I will make the toast; then for a quick walk in the Square, and the two hours’ practice before dinner. Give me the electric toaster. The smell of my toast will soon make you hungry. While we are cooking, tell me about the fight.”

Bertrand began the story of the attack, which he tried to tell without exaggeration. Guy listened attentively.

“I don’t believe in fighting, if you can help it,” he said, “but if you must fight in order to keep other boys from making your life a torment, learn to fight well. Don’t hit below the belt, and don’t strike anybody in the eyes. Just make the boys respect you, if you can; and don’t think of fighting at all, if you can help it. It was good of Schmidmeyer,—very good,—particularly after you had behaved so badly by taking up with those horrible Simons.”

X

SCHMIDMEYERS' BIRTHDAY PARTY

THE Schmidmeyers lived in a very high apartment. It is true that the Elevated Railroad made a great noise at frequent intervals; but the family, like many other families, were entirely accustomed to the noise.

"We couldn't sleep in a quiet street," Carl Schmidmeyer said. "Quietness always wakes me up."

This was only one of the strange things heard by Bertrand at the birthday party. It was a pleasant party. Guy was warmly welcomed by the Schmidmeyer family; and Mrs. Schmidmeyer's joy at seeing Bertrand—"the dear brother of Amélie, who saved my darling baby,"—brought tears to Guy's eyes, and made Bertrand ashamed of himself. But many times Mrs. Schmidmeyer said: "Oh, how often have I wished that I had let the authorities take you off at Ellis Island, and then had you sent home! But where to send you, that was the question! There was no address on your father's telegram,

except Senlis, which was in the midst of the war."

One could not help liking Mr. Schmidmeyer. He was so kind and so big and so jolly! His blue eyes looked into yours so keenly, so understandingly! And his large, red right hand clasped yours in so hearty a manner that you felt he meant to be your friend. He "looked after offices in Wall Street," he told Bertrand; and his employees had helped him to make a "tidy sum"; so that he had no fear for the future, as long as he could work. He could take good care of his children until they should be able to work as he did. And he added (this Bertrand readily understood, because the kitchen was near the parlor): "There will be roast turkey and mince pie."

'Phonse looked very plump and rosy.

"I am five years old," he said, taking Bertrand's hand. "Five! I am not a little boy, but a big, big boy," and he stood on tiptoe. "I am to have a cake, and perhaps a dog like the one we lost in France,—Bébé."

"He remembers!" exclaimed Bertrand in astonishment.

"He remembers everything," said his proud father. "Yes, he shall have a dog; but, of

course, we could not have a large dog in this small apartment. Nevertheless, we shall have a dog."

Mark, a stout, good-natured boy, with blue eyes like his father's, began to laugh.

"We shall see! This dog will give no trouble. He is the brother of the lost Bébé. We shall see!"

The whole family joined in the laugh and 'Phonse said:

"My dog's name shall be Peter,—the brother of the lost Bébé."

At this moment a young woman entered. She carried a box tied with red and white ribbons. Her cheeks were very rosy, and her eyes blue, but of a blue that had a look of sea-color in them. The children, with the exception of Carl, ran forward joyously.

"O Aunt Karen!" they called out.

"She is not their aunt," Mr. Schmidmeyer said: "she is a nice Danish girl, Karen Hansen, who has come to New York because her father and mother are dead. She teaches the children music, and likewise helps my wife to cook."

The position of the family fell in Bertrand's eyes at once. They kept no cook. Instead of kissing the hand of the young woman (Bertrand,

like all French boys, had been brought up to kiss the hand of grown-up ladies), he clicked his heels together and bowed very stiffly.

"My, what a bow!" giggled Carl.

Guy guessed what was passing in Bertrand's mind, and he whispered to him:

"The young woman is a *lady*,—I can see that. Don't be a fool!"

They stood together near the piano, so nobody heard their conversation.

"Aunt" Karen seemed to love the children very much. They clung to her, all talking at once.

"No, no!" she said, holding the big pasteboard box over her head. "You shall not open it until you drink the birthday chocolate.¹ It is something to eat. And Carl must play no tricks to-day."

As she held the box up, Guy noticed that she wore the finger of a white kid glove on the first finger of her left hand. She seemed so kind, so amused, so cheerful, and so desirous of making everybody happy, that Guy found himself smiling, too.

The next arrival was a young German, a friend

¹ In Denmark a birthday is always marked by the drinking of chocolate.

of the Schmidmeyers. He appeared to be about eighteen years of age; he was tall, dark-eyed, rather severe-looking, and he held himself very stiffly. He bowed to everybody in turn, clicking his heels. He was very pale, and seemed to be recovering from an illness.

“Freiherr von Tropper,” said Mrs. Schmidmeyer, introducing him.

Guy Vaucoubert wanted to leave the room: he could not meet a German,—he, a Frenchman, with his country at war! But the German walked over to him, and extended his hand.

“I see that you are French,” he said, with a kindly smile, which greatly improved his looks. “I am German, but let us be Americans to-day—and forget!”

“I am an American,” answered Guy, proudly. “Ah, yes, let us forget for the moment!”

They clasped hands. Bertrand would have liked to proclaim himself as the son of a soldier of France, but he was forgotten—and he, too, soon forgot—in the splendor of the supper.

First, when the folding doors were opened, they were dazzled by the table, laden with flowers and leaves and all kinds of beautiful looking food, in the midst of which sat a great turkey, surrounded by a garland of sausages. Around

this, on the shining mahogany, was a ring of Karen Hansen's *smørrebrød*, of all colors, made as only the Danes know how to make them. "Butter bread" they would be called in English, for want of a better word. Here, in a frill of white paper, was one that looked like a daisy, but it was really dried salmon and white of egg. And—but how can one describe Bertrand's birthday cake, surrounded by five pink candles? Carl was allowed to cut it, assisted by his father. And then everybody drank his health in chocolate.

When the supper was over, 'Phonse saw his gifts: a big sword from the young German; a book of Mother Goose songs from Guy; and, among the other things, a big dachshund, with glittering eyes, from his father and mother. This was "Peter." He was brown and fat, and not mounted on wheels (his legs could hardly hold him up, though they were very strong and very short). 'Phonse clasped him to his heart, with shouts of joy. When all had taken their chocolate, 'Phonse went to bed, even on a glad day like this. Peter went, too, guided by Aunt Karen.

Suddenly there sounded a series of shrieks from the bedroom. Mr. Schmidmeyer disappeared, to find out what was the matter. In a

few moments he returned, looking very angry, and holding Carl by the ear. He was followed by Aunt Karen, seemingly much frightened.

"You are a wicked boy!" she said impatiently.

"Girls are cowards!" howled Carl. "I didn't do anything! I just laid a dead mouse on the floor and made it move with a string."

Bertrand laughed. He, too, had a great contempt for the cowardice of all women.

"I will talk to you presently," his father said, grimly.

"Oh, don't spoil the birthday!" Aunt Karen pleaded. "Carl merely meant to be funny."

"Women are such cowards!" Carl saw his father relenting.

"Suppose you go and rest a while, Karen," Mrs. Schmidmeyer said. "I will go with you. And while we are away," she added significantly, "Carl shall hear a story which may change his opinion."

There was silence until after Mrs. Schmidmeyer and Aunt Karen had left the room.

"You think that Aunt Karen is a coward, Carl, because she is startled at the sudden sight of a mouse; and I suppose you think that all women are cowards because any brute can frighten them easily. Women are often braver than men."

"O father, how can that be?" asked Carl.

"Aunt Karen," the father continued, "has one of her fingers covered with the end of a glove. Well, not so long ago there was a fire in a factory down-town. The confusion was terrible, and, before the firemen came, some of the young girls employed in the place jumped from the windows and were wretchedly hurt. One girl was about to jump when Aunt Karen, who was passing in the street below, saw her through the shifting veil of smoke and fire. Everybody else was paralyzed. Karen called out: 'Stay! I will come for you!' The frightened girl heard the voice, and paused. Karen went up the fire-escape, though every voice in the immense crowd protested, and carried the poor girl to the street safe and sound. One hand was badly burned: she could not use it for days. It is almost healed now. Would *you* have done that, Carl?"

Carl's face flushed; he paused.

"No, father: I should have been afraid."

"But Aunt Karen was not."

Tears came into Carl's eyes.

"I will beg her pardon!" he said.

"Yes, do," said his father. "But wait until you see her alone. She will not like an apology before other people."

Bertrand was filled with admiration of the bravery of the young girl, and of the truthfulness of Carl.

"Not many boys, Mr. Schmidmeyer," he remarked, "would have said that—what Carl said. I mean that I should be ashamed to say that I would not have dared to save the young girl."

Carl gave him a grateful glance.

"Now we shall have music," said the host.

Mrs. Schmidmeyer and Aunt Karen came back, and there was some consultation over the program. In the meantime Mr. Schmidmeyer and Guy had a chance to talk.

"I am worried about Bertrand, Mr. Schmidmeyer. He is progressing very well in his studies, and his improvement in English is remarkable. You know, of course, that his father is in France, likely to be killed at any moment. I love the boy, and I should like to keep him with me. But somewhere in the United States he has a relative, to whom his father wants him to be entrusted; and I have no clue to the whereabouts of this man. Perhaps your wife knows something about him."

"She does not. She, too, was most anxious when she reached New York, for the same reason as you have."

"It is too bad. I have written to Captain de Value, but I fear my letter did not reach him. Besides," continued Guy, "a boy of Bertrand's age needs a woman to look after him; it is just the time when a mother is most needed."

"Perhaps we can arrange with my wife," said Mr. Schmidmeyer. "In a family like ours there is always room for one more."

"How lucky it was that Bertrand met Carl the other day!" said Guy. "People would hardly believe that such a coincidence could happen, if they read of it in a book. But children are never surprised by such coincidences. And they often happen."

"Providence directs our lives!" exclaimed Mr. Schmidmeyer, reverently. "In my life the most wonderful coincidences have occurred, but they have been in answer to prayers."

Von Tropper came up with a sheet of music in his hand.

"I recognize your song here, Mr. Vaucoubert." He smiled very pleasantly. "It is famous. It took a great prize, I know."

Guy's face became very red. He was pleased, and at the same time rather annoyed that the discovery should have been made by a German, whom politeness obliged him to tolerate.

“Oh, yes,” added Von Tropper, “we heard all about it in Breslau, where we are very musical! Some of our musicians competed, and failed. I know ‘The Flower and the Star’ by heart.”

“Are you the author of the lovely song?” asked Mr. Schmidmeyer. “We all sing it,—that is, all New York. Even the street organs can not make us weary of it.”

“You see,” continued Von Tropper, “how good it is! I was terribly ill in Columbus, Ohio, where I had gone to meet a great engineer for some direction as to my American studies,—so horribly ill that I can never be able to fight for my—but let that pass,” he said hastily. “I can never be a soldier; that is certain. And every German feels half dead if he can not be a soldier. I was ill, but I was well enough to read; and I heard that the Great Middle West Choral Society had offered a splendid piano and a thousand dollars for the first song. I tried for the prizes; but you, Mr. Vaucoubert, won, and I am glad you did.”

“Thank you!” said Guy, heartily. After all this German could not fight.

“We shall sing it to-night. And the curious part of the whole thing was that the nearest neighbor of the farmer to whose house I went

afterward was the man whose opinion decided the matter, and who had the prize piano ornamented."

"Who is he?" asked Guy, much interested.

"Wait,—I forgot his name for the moment!"

Guy waited eagerly. Mr. Schmidmeyer was pleased. He would not have invited Von Tropper if he had known beforehand that Guy was coming: he would not have risked a clash of nationalities in this terrible time. But a mutual interest in music had almost made his guests friends. "I shall fight for France myself as soon as I can,—and I shall not have to fight this German."

"Oh, yes, I remember now! He was an old gentleman who had a big house near Clarence,—a Mr. Watson."

"Watson!" exclaimed Guy. "Watson! Are you sure? In Ohio?"

"Yes; I'm sure it was Watson,—Walter Watson."

"I believe you've found him," said Mr. Schmidmeyer.

"But it can't be true. It is too much of a coincidence. It can't be true!"

"Why shouldn't it be true?" asked Von Tropper, laughingly. "But you seem so pleased

that it looks as if you want to get rid of the boy, and I suspect your reason."

"Well, you're right. I'd like to keep him; but, frankly, I feel that I ought to offer my service to France, now that she suffers."

"And I to Germany, now that she suffers—if I wasn't such a wretched creature."

"Never mind!" rejoined Guy. "You'll be a strong man yet." He laughed. "It is absurd that we two, bound to be enemies, should talk this way. But there is no reason why we should hate each other."

"No," answered Von Tropper. "And I can sympathize with your feelings. But I hope that you may not have a chance to fight us."

"And I echo your wish, applying to yourself. Since you can not fight us, there will be one brave soldier less."

Von Tropper was pleased; he bowed, and clicked his heels.

Mrs. Schmidmeyer approached the group, very much delighted. She, like her husband, had been afraid that their two men guests would clash.

"We have found Mr. Watson!" said Guy.

"You found the addresses on the boxes in 'Le Soleil,' then?"

"What boxes?"

Carl came up with his flute.

"The children's trunks had gone, not by 'La Lune,' but by 'Le Soleil,' of the French Line."

"There!" exclaimed Mr. Schmidmeyer. "It took a woman to remember that! We men were bothering about the mystery of Mr. Watson's address, and a woman comes and settles it! A visit to the dock of the French Line would have relieved your anxiety, Mr. Vaucoubert."

"This is true. One always forgets the easiest things to remember. I salute you, Madame Schmidmeyer! Carl, here is another case where a woman has proved herself to be quicker than we men."

XI

BERTRAND FINDS HIS UNCLE

“Now,” said Mrs. Schmidmeyer, “we shall sing. I will play the accompaniments. And we must make Bertrand ready to go to this Mr. Watson, after you have heard from him. Begin!” She seated herself at the piano. “It shall be Mr. Vaucoubert’s song, and he will be the director of the concert.”

She played the melody, and Bertrand’s high tones trilled above the voices of the others:

“The wild rose in the bank of fern,
So lonely felt by day and night,
For every way that she could turn,
She saw no other flowers in sight.

Though fern was high and grass was soft,
No blossom was there anywhere,
Ah, many a time she sighed, and oft,
She wept among the maiden hair.

Ah, shall I live and die alone,
Happy no more, happy no more,
Only the fern, the grass, the stone,
No sisters near a cottage door.

One night, she raised her heart above,—
The heart of a rose is sweet and true,—
She saw the star:—‘ I see my love,—
Dear flower in heaven ; God sent you.’ ”

After this followed song after song, until it was time for Mrs. Schmidmeyer and Aunt Karen to bring in lemonade and cakes. Then the guests wished everybody a happy birthday, and went home,—Von Tropper promising to visit Guy, declaring that there should be no talk of war.

The next day Guy and Bertrand went down to the office of the French Line. Captain Grandcourt happened to be on shore,—the “ La Lune ” having arrived two days before. He knew Guy, and the trunks and the boxes were recovered. They were addressed to A. and B. de Value, care of Walter Watson, Watson’s Corner, Clarence, Ohio. As Amélie had the keys, the trunks had to be broken open, that the custom house officers might inspect them. Bertrand was very glad to recover his belongings again ; but he hoped that Mr. Walter Watson might not be found ; he wanted to stay with Guy. Nevertheless, Guy wrote Mr. Watson a letter, in which he detailed, in somewhat stiff English, Bertrand’s adventures. This was on Monday. On the next Wednesday a dispatch arrived :

"Glad to see my grandnephew. Letter in mail."

A letter followed, with minute instructions, and containing a check. On Friday, Bertrand, weeping and disconsolate, said good-bye to Guy Vaucoubert, who had resolved to be a soldier of France, as Bertrand was no longer dependent on him. He regretted that Bertrand must leave him, but he felt that his duty lay in defending his country. Karen Hansen, who met him at the farewell supper, to which the kind Schmidmeyers asked him, was of a different opinion.

"Why go to the war?" she queried.

Von Tropper, who was present, answered at once:

"I envy him. He goes—as I would go, in spite of my illness, if I could find a steamer to convey me—to fight for his country. It is his duty. Though we are on different sides, I see that it is his duty."

"You are right. God will bless me for fighting for my country," said Guy.

"Yes," continued Von Tropper; "and He would bless me, too, for obeying the call of my country."

"A good Catholic must be a good patriot, and fight for his own country," said Guy. "I am

against—but no, Von Tropper, let us not talk about the war. We will remain friends until we shall be obliged to be enemies on the field of battle.”

They parted friends. Karen Hansen promised to be an “aunt” to Bertrand, and to write to him; and all the Schmidmeyers bound themselves to send monthly letters to Guy. Bertrand tried hard to keep back his tears. Under the care of the conductor—labelled like an express package,—he started for Clarence, Ohio. He had only one consolatory thought:

“Guy may meet my father and Amélie.”

And where was Amélie? It is time to tell of her adventures. She was very different from her brother. In the first place, she had never known fear. She believed firmly that, if she did her best, God would take care of her under all circumstances; and, in her short life, she had made special friends of her saints,—St. Jane Frances de Chantal and St. Francis of Assisi. Her mother had taught her to imitate the common sense of one and the charity of the other.

She had been brought up to regard the Blessed Virgin as her chief protectress, and her saints as good friends, who understood her perfectly.

And there was likewise her mother, who watched over her daughter, too. Amélie had her faults; and, if her mother were alive, perhaps she would have regarded Amélie's courage as a fault. Madame la Brune had never looked on Amélie as faultless, but she attributed her boldness in adventure and her quick temper to her American blood.

Having decided that she ought to go to Senlis to help her father, Amélie started at once. It is certain that both her father and Madame la Brune would have objected, if they had been there. The father would have foreseen the dangers; Madame la Brune would have been shocked at the idea of the little girl's thinking of such a journey. Amélie herself would have shuddered at the difficulties, if her father had described them, and she would have obeyed Madame la Brune.

As it was, she had no knowledge of the dangers, and Madame la Brune was not near her. It was enough to know that her father was ill. As he was ill, he needed her, she thought. That she might be a burden to him, that she might not be able to help him, did not occur to her. She obeyed an impulse which most children would have obeyed, had there been no wise, older person

near to prevent them. She wanted to go to her father.

In her room at the hotel, she read, after she had eaten and slept, the telegram from Vaucoubert:

“Your father wounded at Senlis. I will care for him. He sends his blessing—Vaucoubert.”

Now Amélie had not much confidence in Vaucoubert's power of taking care of her father. Vaucoubert could sing, but she had never heard that he could do anything else. In fact, when he had done anything unusual, Père Chalais had often said: “Ah, these singers!” And, besides—suppose—suppose (a lump came into Amélie's throat),—suppose—that her dear father would wish, above all things, to see his little girl before he died. Yes, yes, she was right, she said to herself, to leave Bertrand with the kind Schmidmeyers and go to her father.

She counted the one hundred franc notes pinned in her blouse; she had money, which she would take good care of. Her dressing case was well filled for a short journey; she would add to its contents a box of sandwiches and a bottle of hot chocolate. She went down-stairs, and found her friend, the porter.

"You will get me a ticket for Senlis, please; for I must meet my father there," she said.

He shook his head.

"Senlis is in the hands of the Germans; besides, you can not get on board the trains: they are full of soldiers. You had better go home."

"Home is where my father is."

"And you have no mother?"

"She is in heaven."

"I will do what I can," answered the porter. Perhaps, he thought, a nice little girl might pass where a grown person would be detained. "Who knows? She seeks her only parent,—the good God will take care of her."

Amélie was quite ready when the porter returned. A large thermos bottle, filled with hot chocolate, and two dozen rolls had been added to the store of clothes in her box, and she had purchased a large rug and a warm woolen "sweater."

"Well?"

"I could get a ticket only to Paris. When you reach Paris, you may perhaps find a way to Senlis."

"It is the best you can do?"

"The best I can do, Mademoiselle. The train will start in twenty minutes."

“I am ready,—here is a taxi.”

Amélie gave the good porter five francs, and paid for her ticket. The porter found a place for her in a second-class compartment. He had managed well, for already seated there were two Sisters of Charity.

“A young girl on her way to her father at Senlis,—a mere child,” he said, touching his cap. “You will perhaps permit her to sit with you.”

The Sisters, smiling, made room for her. After a short delay, this train, usually so rapid, began to crawl along the track. The Sisters were most kind during the long and wearisome journey. Amélie told them that she was on her way to meet her father at Senlis.

“Senlis!” exclaimed the elder, Sister Emphrosye. “It is impossible. The Germans are in the town, and we fear much for our poor Sisters, who have a hospital there.”

“I shall go there, nevertheless,” replied Amélie, calmly. “My father is there.”

Sister Emphrosye said a decade of her Rosary before she answered.

“I fear for you, child.”

Sister Rose untied a small package of bread and butter.

“You are hungry.”

“My name is Amélie de Value, Sister, and I shall go to Senlis. You may think I am droll and perhaps a little mad; but I have American blood in my veins and that makes me different.”

The Sisters nodded to each other. After all, if she were half American, she might succeed. The Americans, even the children, were more bold than the French.

“I am not hungry; but my good Sisters, I fear that you are.”

“Alas, yes!” said Sister Emphrosye, laughing. “It is a long time since we have eaten. The wounded ones in Paris leave us no time; and, before we could eat, we were summoned to a Red Cross hospital, and we started at once. But we have enough bread for three.”

Amélie opened her box.

“Hot chocolate!” she exclaimed gaily. “And a nice silver cup to drink it,—the cup of my god-mother. We will all drink. And here are some *brioches*.”

The Sisters refused the little rolls. They were delighted, however, to drink some chocolate. It was very hot.

“It puts strength into me,” said Sister Rose.

“And imagine that this little girl thought of

it!" said Sister Emphrosye. "These Americans are really marvellous."

Amélie received the compliment very complacently.

"I will even take a message to your Sisters at Senlis, if you wish," she said.

Sister Emphrosye took an envelope and a large card from her bag, and, with an ink-pencil, wrote a little note, recommending Amélie to her Sisters.

"If they are alive, they will welcome you. But" (she sighed deeply) "I doubt it! However, we offer them our prayers and our love."

Amélie took the note and pinned it to the inside of her blouse.

"I should fear that she lacks humility," whispered Sister Rose.

"No," replied Sister Emphrosye: "she has great simplicity."

"Don't you think that the good God and the Blessed Virgin and the saints will help a child that goes to her father?" asked Amélie.

"Yes, my dear,—yes, my dear!" said Sister Emphrosye, embracing her. "You do right to trust."

The Sisters had reached their station. The compartment became more crowded. The people

who came in were quiet women and men dressed mostly in black. Dusk had fallen, and, except when the train was stopped for various reasons, nobody spoke much. Amélie slept. The people in the train supposed that she was the daughter of a tall, dark woman who sat next to her. Nobody imagined that a well-dressed French child would travel alone, and nobody asked her questions.

A little later two English Red Cross nurses entered the compartment. Amélie was awakened by their voices,—they spoke English.

“Yes, we were told to leave Belgium; and the Germans were very decent until one of the older nurses called names at some of the German soldiers, from the car window at a station near Berlin. That was bad for us; but, thanks to the doctor who was with us, and spoke German, we got through.”

Amélie, half asleep, determined to be very polite to the German soldiers, if she met any on the way. She remembered nothing more until they reached Paris. It was her second visit to the city. She recalled very well the name of the Hôtel Louis le Grand, where she had stayed with her father. On second thought, she concluded that the Gare du Nord was the best place

for her; for, as she learned from the old porter who took her box, she could there take the train for Senlis.

"Ah, Mademoiselle," the old man said (there seemed to be no young porters), "you will find the Germans at Senlis!"

"It is true, perhaps," Amélie answered. "But they will not stay long. Besides, the Germans are human beings, and they will surely respect a child that goes to her father."

She secured her ticket for Senlis. There was much talk about military passes, and many persons were refused permission to leave Paris. She could hear talk of this around her. She was not questioned: it was assumed that so very young a girl, in this country of careful parents, had somebody to look after her. There were crowds of people about her. Many were coming back to Paris, having left in a panic of fear. There was an elderly maid servant, in charge of two small dogs in a basket and a canary bird in a cage, tied with the tricolor ribbon of France; there an old man, with two chairs tied together, and under his arm a long loaf of bread. Her big rug, by which she stood, while she waited, excited some comment.

"How can you keep that," one woman asked,

“while our soldiers suffer these nights of the cold?”

“I am taking it to a soldier of France, at Senlis,” she answered.

“God bless thee!” replied the woman.

Other old men, women, and children were coming in, evidently in great fear. They were, as a rule, dressed in their best clothes, and they carried all kinds of household goods. Amélie’s heart sank, as she saw them. They looked as if they were flying from horrid things.

“Why are you so sad?” she asked a little girl who stood near her, carrying a pasteboard box in one arm, and a large rag doll on the other.

“You would be sad if your house was burned down, and ——”

But the child was hurried away.

Groups of wounded soldiers passed by, some of them on stretchers, others limping, others with bandaged heads and arms; many supported by their comrades. Their uniforms were cut and stained, and their faces were pale, but they were cheerful. They sang aloud.

“I will sing aloud in my heart,” Amélie said to herself. “If I do not sing, I must weep, and that will be bad; for I shall be sad when papa sees me.”

She caught sight of an elderly couple just ahead of her, and she followed them. In a few minutes she saw in the car. The fields shone in the morning sunlight; they were fertile. Women worked in the vegetable gardens, for there were few men. Market carts moved slowly toward Paris,—somewhat more slowly than the train, which “like the wounded snake dragged its slow length along.” Amélie tried to keep her heart singing,—she did not entirely succeed; then she said her prayers; there was the little chaplet in her pocket. “When the heart can no longer sing, it can pray,”—she remembered Madame la Brune’s saying. The leaves were beginning to turn and to fall. In some places they made patches of yellow in the sunlight.

Three hours passed, and then the train stopped in the ruins of what had been a railway station. Bombs and fire had done their work. For the first time in her life, Amélie knew what destruction was. War had seemed to her to be a glorious thing,—a thing of music and flashing swords and waving flags.

Her father had spoken of war as of something great and splendid, and of course Bertrand had boasted of the honor of being a soldier. So this was what war brought! Amélie’s courage left

her. She put down her rug and sat on it; she felt giddy. At any moment the German soldiers might rush upon her, she thought; or a bomb might fall. And, then, suppose her father should come seeking her and not find her! She jumped up at once.

She made her way through the fallen stones, and saw an old cab drawn by a wretched-looking horse. There was no porter to carry her baggage. She made her way to the cab. The driver had disappeared; so she adjusted her bundle and box, and waited.

"I could drive the old horse myself," she thought, "if I knew where to go." But she did not know where to go. She sat in solitary state on the ancient leather seat, waiting for the Germans or the driver to appear.

Two women in black, each carrying net bags well filled with odds and ends, stopped.

"Ah, you can afford to drive, little girl!" one of them said. "We, too, could once afford to drive; but, though we are weary, we must walk."

They looked weary; their black clothes were covered with dust. The eyes of the younger seemed very sad and tired.

"Are you from Paris, little girl? Perhaps we can help you?"

Amélie could not keep back her tears, these two looked so pathetic and yet were so kind.

"I am from Paris: I seek my father. Perhaps, when the driver comes, it may please you to go with me; I will gladly pay your fare."

"We have no place to go. The enemy came suddenly, and we ran from our house. The house was probably destroyed by bombs. My husband is perhaps in the ruins."

"I shall never see my father in this world again!" Tears prevented the younger woman from saying more. "And my husband is a soldier."

"What is your father's name?"

"Jacques Oliver."

"If I hear of him, I will tell you. I would like to know where *my* father is. He is Captain de Value."

"It will be difficult to find him,—very difficult," said the elder woman. "So many soldiers were ——"

The younger woman stopped her.

"So many soldiers passed through here—after the Germans."

"And have the Germans really left?"

"We came out of the cellar and fled to the country," said the younger woman. "We met

some German soldiers, but they were good to my two little children: they gave them milk. Ah, it is not the poor German soldiers I blame for this! My children are safe at their grandfather's farm. I had to come back to hunt for my poor old father."

"We both have come."

XII

SEARCHING FOR CAPTAIN DE VALUE

As Amélie sat there waiting for the driver to come, a wretched-looking woman, with cunning eyes, came up. Her grey hair was half hidden by a black straw hat.

“Good-day, Mademoiselle!” she said. “I see you are a stranger at Senlis. And you will need a place for the night, if you are going far, and the hotel is damaged. You will stay with me. In my little café, there is a room vacant. It will be cheap.”

Amélie, suddenly faced with the fact that she had nowhere to go, was about to descend from the cab, when one of the other women, Madame Oliver, interfered:

“No, no, Mademoiselle, you must not go!”

The grey-haired woman with the cunning eyes put her arms akimbo.

“The child evidently has no one. I heard her say that she has nowhere to go. Is not my poor house as good as another’s?”

It was evident to Madame Oliver, though not to Amélie, that this woman had been drinking.

“I will tell you,” she added, shaking her fists, “that you are a bad woman! The child will come with me!”

She seized Amélie’s box with one hand, threw it on the ground, and tried to help the girl from the carriage.

“Come, little one!” she said. “I will be a good grandmother to you,—I who love children! You shall stay in my house until you are rested.”

Amélie found herself caught in the old woman’s muscular arms. She struggled.

“Wait, please!” she said. “I will go, but I will not be forced to go.”

A man’s voice caught her ears. A priest had come across from the station; his soutane was old and worn, but his face was ruddy and cheerful.

“Wait!” he called. “What do I see? Mère Gaspard, you will cease to trouble this child. Go!”

The old woman seemed frightened; she began to hobble off at once, shaking her fist at the priest as soon as his back was turned, and cursing under her breath.

“You have escaped from a wicked woman, child,” the priest said. “But why are you alone here?”

Amélie, trembling, looked up into the priest's kindly face.

"I am looking for my father, who, I hear, has been wounded; and I was obliged to come alone."

The priest turned to the two women.

"I am so busy that I can do little for the child at present. Take her with you to your farm, and ——"

"I can pay, *mon Père*,—I can pay, if these good women will let me stay with them until I find my father."

The priest shook his head sadly.

"But does our farm, the Clos Pommier, still exist, Father?" asked the elder woman. "Is it not entirely destroyed?"

"The orchard is still there," answered the priest. "The apple trees are uninjured,—Nicole gathered the apples just in time. And you can live in the house. The bombs have, however, destroyed much."

"And Jacques?"

"We have not found him. But be patient and resigned. Pray and work," said the priest. "You will find much to do. And you can take care of this young girl, or she may fall into evil hands. There are wicked ones among us. Take her with you to the Clos Pommier ——"

"Yes," Amélie interrupted,—“yes. Thank you, Father! I will go, and we can together look for our lost ones. And I will not be a burden on you: I can pay.”

“Perhaps we have nothing to offer,” said Madame Oliver; “and we might charge you too much.”

“Oh, say two francs a day!” observed the priest, who knew well the scrupulous character of Madame Oliver. “Jean!” he called, and a stout man rolled rather than walked out of the café. “Why,” he asked, with a smile, “are all cabmen so stout?”

Amélie looked at the fat Jean, in his big, oil-cloth-covered hat, and laughed.

“Laugh when you can, my child,” said the priest. “Even in days like these, one should not be too sad. I will go to see you. What is your name?”

“Amélie de Value, Father.”

“Thank you, Amélie! Be of good cheer. Say your prayers, and we shall find your father. These ladies will drive with you to the Clos Pommier. They are weary; and you, in your charity, will pay their fare. Jean, you will not charge much.”

“As little as I can,” answered Jean, rolling on

the box. "Ah, *mon Père*, we owe you much, here in Senlis! You have done more than your duty."

"When you are seventy years of age—if you do not kill yourself with beer,—you will have learned to do what you ought to do. Now drive on!"

"It was coffee, Father, not beer."

"So much the better. Drive on!"

Madame Oliver and her daughter sank back in the cab.

"Oh, how tired we are! We have walked many kilometers to-day. Mother, how good it is to rest!"

Amélie was very much touched. She had always driven when she wanted to drive; but, like a sensible and healthy child, she had, as a rule, preferred to walk.

"Ah, the good priest!" said Jean, as they jogged along. "He saved what is left of Senlis; and there is more left than appears."

"Oh," exclaimed both the women, covering their faces, "there are the houses of the Rue Faubourg St. Martin! They are in ruins. And the beautiful hotel, and the cathedral,—ah, the cathedral! Yes, I see the tower."

"It is safe. The good curé's white hair must

have softened the hearts of the Germans. It was he that assured them that there had been no shots fired from the tower; but they almost refused to believe it. You see, Captain de Value and his men ——”

“Captain de Value!—my father!” interrupted Amélie.

“A brave soldier, Mademoiselle. You see, when the beginning of the twenty-five thousand German soldiers came, Captain de Value and his men were taken by surprise; but then they made a good fight. It was their bullets which had been, the Germans said, fired from the tower.”

“Oh, where is my father?”

Jean was silent.

“I can only tell you that he fought well. I was among the beech trees, and saw it. And there was one German lad who fell, and a soldier was about to bayonet him—he was already wounded,—but your father picked him up. Then there was fire and smoke, and the houses were in flames. I saw the Germans come—they were here eight days, and I saw them go. I hid in my old house; but when they found me, they left me; for their officer said that I was fit only for tough sausage. They are difficult, these Germans. But the good curé impressed them,

and he gave himself up as a hostage for us. And when they had to go, they respected him."

"Whose house was there?" asked Madame Oliver. "It's in ruins."

"The Brothers Cartier."

"The tailors? And where are they?"

All that could be seen was a high pile of stones, splintered wood, and mortar.

"They are there still."

Madame Oliver covered her face with her hands.

"Yes," continued the driver; "they will never come out of their house alive."

After this, through the ruined streets, they drove out into the country. Some women and old men were in the fields. In half an hour's time they reached a group of buildings, behind which lay an apple orchard and some fields.

"The apple orchard!" said the driver.

Part of the house—almost the whole of one side—had been destroyed; the rest looked much as usual. The stables and the outhouses seemed to be uninjured. The driver rolled slowly from his seat, and opened the big, barred gate. He carried Amélie's luggage into the house. It was a sad home-coming. Amélie felt this, as she went after the women into the gloomy hall. How ter-

rible were the sorrow and suspense that hung over them!

Still, there was some comfort in being at home. The little salon was much the same. The rooms adjoining it had not been touched, but the sleeping chambers at the side were in ruins. Madame Oliver could not suppress an exclamation of pleasure when she discovered that her kitchen was safe. Even the charcoal she had been using when the alarm came was untouched. Back in the orchard, the leaves were falling, and there were a few late apples on the ground. Through the branches, Madame Oliver could see the gable of the house of M. de Girardin. "That at least is safe," she said gratefully. The Girardins had lived near Senlis for hundreds of years; but she missed the towers of the Chateau de Vassy. However, there was a fog, and these great landmarks might still exist, to console her, and yet not be seen.

Suddenly an old woman, wrinkled but rosy-cheeked, rushed from the orchard.

"Nicole!" exclaimed the two women, joyously. They embraced Nicole affectionately.

"And where is *he*?"

"I do not know," replied Nicole, simply. "The Girardins have gone to Paris. The Count de

Vassy is in the army. Where his family is I do not know; and even less do I know where the good patron is."

"Is he dead?" demanded Madame Oliver, piteously. "Tell me!"

Amélie saw how unhappy this question made the old servant.

"She does not know, Madame. But there is evidently hope. We will seek for him, as I shall seek for my father."

Madame Oliver sobbed, but made no answer.

"When the Germans came, their fire destroyed part of our house, because our soldiers were here," said Nicole. "Then our soldiers went over to the Chateau de Vassy, and there was terrible firing. I hid in the cellar, and said my prayers. It seemed days. And the nights were long. There was bread and milk and wine in the cave. There I remained until the good curé came and told me that the Germans had gone. Then I came out, and collected the eggs and fed the chickens and milked the cows just as usual. You will find things in good order."

"Our kind Nicole!"

Madame Oliver and Marie embraced the servant again.

"Now, Nicole, show Mademoiselle to her

room. She has been lent to us for a while by the curé."

Nicole trotted up-stairs to a nice little room, white and clean and full of fresh air, with a crucifix and a piece of blessed palm at the head of the bed.

"I am glad you are here, child," said Nicole. "You will help me with these people. You look as if you had common sense. As for the poor patron, I fear that he is dead."

"It is wrong to fear. I shall believe that my father is alive until I *know*. Let us hope in the good God."

As Amélie unpacked her box, she felt very much discouraged for a moment. The whole world was changed. Nothing seemed fixed; houses and shops and farms, one day so cheerful and comfortable, the next injured or destroyed. Surely one needed all one's courage. But above all was the good God.

Nicole, encouraged and cheered by the return of her mistress, managed to make a large omelette for supper. Madame Oliver was so busy in taking account of her losses, and rejoicing over what she had not lost, she did not notice that Amélie had slipped away. In fact, just as the dusk fell, Amélie had sailed off into the Land of

Dreams, through the door of her little white room.

The next day was so lovely that Amélie, as she rose, looked out of her window and said: "Thank God for the sun!" She ran down-stairs and helped Marie Oliver to make the coffee, while Nicole went out to see that the live stock still existed. Nicole dreaded the coming of soldiers, whether French or German; and each morning brought her a new fear that her fowls or pigs or cows had been captured.

Amélie, having assisted in the household work, went out for a walk; but she was warned by Nicole that she would be obliged to take a knitting lesson in the afternoon. "For," said Nicole, "the winter is coming, and our brave soldiers will suffer if they have no heavy socks and scarfs and wrist-warmers. Even the very young work in the fields and the very old have become strong, or we should have had no harvest this year."

Amélie promised that she would take a lesson in the afternoon. Now she was impatient to get away, to examine the neighborhood of Senlis. Her father and Vaucoubert had been there,—she had no doubt about that. Where were they now?

She shuddered, as she thought of the evil old woman. "I must always try," she thought, "to be on good terms with my Guardian Angel."

XIII

THE FINDING OF CAPTAIN DE VALUE

OLD people and young children were working in the fields, gathering the aftermath. The harvest had been late. The makers of bread were glad that it had been saved from destruction. Amélie, attracted by an enormous clump of blue asters, climbed the stone fence that separated the Clos Pommier (as the apple orchard was called) from the estate of Count de Vassy. She had brought her breakfast roll with her, as she intended to take a long walk; and the second, or real, breakfast is never before eleven o'clock in France. It was a rather large roll, and she held it, unwrapped, in a piece of white paper.

Among the asters two small children were almost hidden; their brown, smooth heads, shining in the sunlight, looked like two tortoises—"turtles," Amélie, when she spoke English, called them—swimming in a softly moving lake of blue. They were small boys. They came forward dripping with asters.

“Good little girl!” they said, in high tones that sounded like one voice.

Amélie was rather shocked at first. After one had been called “Miss,” “little girl” did not seem so agreeable. Still, Amélie reflected, *she* might have made the same mistake when she was as young as these children.

“I am Jean. There is nothing to do in the fields this morning; so, that we may earn our breakfast, we are gathering the asters.”

“For what, Jean?” inquired Amélie, looking down into the little brown face.

“I am Pierre,” interposed the younger, lifting his face and showing a pair of eyes bluer than the asters and the little blouse he wore.

“We are picking these flowers for the graves,” Jean said, taking up the conversation,—“for the graves of the soldiers; and some, too, for our friends who are living soldiers and not in heaven.”

“I am hungry,” Pierre went on, noticing the fresh roll in Amélie’s hand.

“You are naughty!” Jean said, looking hungry himself. “You should not ask.”

Amélie had filled the pocket of the apron, which Nicole had made her put on, with two large pieces of sweetened chocolate from the

precious box of her travels. The boys received the gift of it enthusiastically; they were evidently very hungry.

“But, Pierre, we must keep some for our friends.”

Pierre reluctantly broke his piece in two.

“Your friends? And your mother?” asked Amélie.

“My mother is gone, and our father is in heaven, too,” said Pierre. “You see, I was six years old that day or the day after; and the soldiers came, and the house fell down; so mother and father never came out. We waited all day and all night for them.”

Amélie put her arms around the children; they seemed of the same age.

“Oh, dear, dear little boys!”

“*Big* boys!” said Pierre.

“Who takes care of you?”

The children were brown and plump and clean.

“Our friends.”

“Your friends?”

“Yes. You seem to be a nice little girl. We shall ask them, that you may see them. But they are still sick. Jean and I bring them flowers and apples and green things from our father’s garden; and we sleep in their house, and

we say our prayers to the big captain. And sometimes we find eggs in our hen-house for them. They do not come out. Three are afraid of the Germans, and one of the French."

"I am sleepy," said Jean.

Amélie sat down among the wheat straws and the flowers. She divided her roll between them. Both little heads rested against her.

"Sing," said Pierre, who was the more talkative of the two. "Sing, as mother used to sing."

"*Sur le Pont d'Avignon*," murmured Jean.

Amélie began the famous old song about dancing on the bridge of Avignon, near the old French Palace of the Popes when they were away from Rome for a time.

"More!" they both exclaimed, when she had finished. And then she sang three times "There was once a Shepherdess."

It was growing very warm; and, although Amélie felt proud of having been adopted by these nice children, she was becoming tired of her constrained position, and likewise of her own music.

"Let us go!"

"No," said Pierre. "We are happy here. The Old One bathed us in the lake; we have

eaten. Now you will sing to us many times. We will stay."

"I must go *sometime*," said Amélie, rather crossly. "You can run home to your friends. I will sing one more song."

"You are cross," said Pierre, pouting. "Sing, then, 'There was a Shepherdess' twice more."

Amélie's first impulse was to leave the children. She hesitated for a moment.

"Oh, if you are too cross to sing, tell us the story of the good St. Christopher," murmured little Jean. "He found a boy like me,—just a little boy."

"Oh, I know it!" she said.

It was one of her father's favorite stories. Bertrand loved it. She knew that if she told it once, she would be forced to tell it many times; for children always want the same story told over and over again. Both the little boys seemed determined to remain with her all day; they leaned closer to her, and insisted on having the story of St. Christopher told four times.

"Now we shall sleep." Pierre closed his eyes. "After that you will give us more bread and chocolate."

"Now we shall sleep. We are very good to go to sleep," added Jean.

"Big boys are not sung to sleep," pleaded Amélie, in desperation.

"*You* are not a big boy; *I* am, and I know," said Jean. "Big boys are *always* sung to sleep."

Amélie was not always good-tempered. She was tired; she was hungry; her chance of finding a clue to her father's whereabouts had not increased; she saw that these two had determined to take possession of her, and she resolved to steal away as soon as the sandman had completed his work. But first, to ease her conscience, she asked:

"Why not let me take you to your friends?"

Pierre pouted.

"We are displeased with you: you will not sing. You are a bad girl! Big boys are *always* sung to sleep."

A partridge whirred in the stubble.

"Oh!"—the children became suddenly awake.

"A great bird!" cried Jean.

"You are now a good girl." Pierre caressed Amélie's cheeks with his stained fingers. "You are a good girl. You will not let the big bird carry us off. Sing!"

Submissively, Amélie began Vaucoubert's song:

“ If I were stars in heaven,
And you were flowers on earth —— ”

“ No! no! ” cried both the boys.

“ What do you want now? ” demanded Amélie, her patience breaking down.

“ No! no! ” they wailed in concert. “ It is not right,—the Old One does not sing it that way. It is this way.”

They both chanted, in their shrill voices:

“ If you were queen of roses,
And I were king,
And all the roses in the world were mine,
And everything,
We'd offer them upon Our Lady's shrine.”

Amélie felt as if the world had suddenly stood still.

“ Who taught you that? ”

“ The Old One,” said Pierre, “ when he wants us to go to sleep.”

“ He is cross sometimes. He slaps us,” said Jean, seeking for sympathy.

“ Oh, take me to see him, dear children! ” cried Amélie, rising.

The “ dear children ” remained obstinately rooted to the ground.

“ No; he will slap you, too,” said Pierre. “ He

does not know that the Germans have gone; he will not believe it; he thinks that you are a German."

"He thinks that you are a German," added Jean, looking into her eyes to see how she would take this assertion. "No: he would slap us."

"There is one with him who was a German," continued Pierre. "But the Old One slapped him, and he is now a good Frenchman. He is a giant."

The boys looked solemnly at Amélie; they expected the effect of this to be terrible.

"He would kill you as soon as look at you," said Jean. "He would fly away with you, like the big bird we just saw."

Amélie would have shaken these two, if she dared.

"You do not love me!" she said suddenly.

"Oh, yes, we do!" the boys cried. "You gave us chocolate. Come, we will take you to our friends."

Amélie trembled with excitement. The children took her hands. They led her through the stubble, to a long lane between two rows of poplars, then to an avenue of beeches which led to the Chateau de Vassy. The tall pillars on either side of the gate had fallen down; a bomb

had scattered the ironwork, and the road inside the gate was covered with the remains of the lodge and the outhouses.

"We can not go in," Amélie said.

The boys pulled her through dangerous passages, into which they went like squirrels. At last they reached a great open space in front of the chateau, which had lost three of its towers. The remains of these lay in great heaps on the lawn. Amélie, very tired, sat on one of the great stones. She was trembling. Perhaps she should soon see Vaucoubert, and she would know about her father.

"Where are they—your old friends?" she asked.

The children had forgotten her. They had found a board, which they had placed on the base of a pillar and constructed a seesaw. They were shrieking with delight.

"Where are your friends?" asked Amélie, almost in despair.

"Higher,—higher!" exclaimed Pierre.

Amélie rose and stopped the play.

"Tell me at once, where are your friends?"

"You can not play with us: you are a girl. Go home! Let our board alone! Higher!" the dear children shouted.

Amélie went back to her seat and covered her face with her hands. Her tears might move the boys, she thought: they paid no attention to her. Almost desperate, she took up the song:

“ Si vous étiez reine des roses,
Et moi le roi.”

She kept her voice clear and steady, saying a “Hail Mary” softly between each stanza. There was no response.

“Higher!” called the children. “*Houp-la! Houp-la!*”

Now she wept really. This sudden hope seemed gone! She bent her head in her hands,—a lonely little girl, shedding tears among ruins! Far off sounded the cannon: the war had not ceased.

“Amélie!”

Beside her stood her father; he embraced her with his left arm.

“O papa!”

She looked up into his face,—a very thin, white face. She put her hand out for his right hand. There was only an empty sleeve.

“O papa!” she said again.

The little boys left their seesaw and came over to Captain de Value. They smiled engagingly.

"We brought your little girl; we are good boys."

"I heard Vaucoubert's song," said Captain de Value. "Our Lady guided you."

"No," said Pierre. "We brought her. The Holy Virgin may have told *us* to bring her, but we brought her; we are good boys."

"Yes, yes!" Captain de Value smiled for the first time in many days. "You are good boys. Go and play! Dearest, little girl!"

"O father, you will never leave me any more!"

"Dear child, I am afraid that you will be burdened by an invalid father. I have lost half an arm—the right unhappily,—and my left foot is useless."

"How you suffered! And I away from you!"

"That is past, thank God! Vaucoubert, who had found my regiment, having lost himself on the railways, was here when the enemy came and when we drove them out. He thought I was dying, but now I am happy. Come into the chateau. My friend, the Count de Vassy, would not object to our being his guests, if he knew of it. We have a colony here. Come, dearest!"

Captain de Value could walk only very slowly, and with the aid of a stick. Amélie almost sobbed aloud as she felt her great, big father, the

bravest soldier in France, lean heavily on her shoulder.

“Tell the Old One that we were not bold, and that he must not slap us!” called Pierre and Jean, from the seesaw.

“Very well!” the Captain answered. “Those funny children, Vaucoubert, a young wounded German officer, a frightened and sick farmer, and a convalescent cat, make up our colony. We are well fed and well warmed these cold nights; and we can perhaps find a little room for you.”

Silently they went through the hall into the drawing-room of the castle. It was a very fine, large, square room, with windows reaching from the ceiling to the floor. One of the splendid crystal chandeliers had been struck down and lay sparkling in the corner. Otherwise, there was no sign that a battle had been near. At one of the open windows, a thin young man sat in an easy-chair. He wore a long dressing-gown and he looked very weak. Vaucoubert, older-looking than ever, sat at the open piano. A man in a peasant's blouse, holding a long-handled coffee-pot, ran away as they entered. A white cat, with pinkish eyes, stood on the piano, arching its back.

Vaucoubert turned. He was amazed.

“Little Amélie!” he cried. “And you are not

on the ocean?" He hugged the little girl, and raised his hands in blessing several times. "I will compose a new sacred song for this day. We shall have a happy breakfast together. Oliver will bring the coffee. See, I have the little table in the corner."

They were silent while the Angelus sounded.

"Now, papa," said Amélie, "wire at once to Mrs. Schmidmeyer that Bertrand must not be sent back, because I am not there. There is no place for him."

XIV

ANXIETY ABOUT BERTRAND

OLIVER came in timidly. He was a man of sixty. He seemed about to run away when he saw Amélie. She cast a quick glance at him; she recognized him by his daughter's resemblance to him. He turned away, evidently frightened by the new face.

"It is Monsieur Oliver, of the Clos Pommier," Amélie said quickly. "I am glad to meet you. Your wife and daughter are well and at the farm."

"Never again!"

"But you are wrong, Monsieur Oliver. Your wife and daughter are at the Clos Pommier. They await you."

The man straightened up. He looked long into Amélie's face.

"You do not lie?" he asked.

"She is my daughter," said Captain de Value, sternly.

Oliver took the coffee to the table in the corner of the drawing-room. He straightened the cloth and arranged the plates. He then returned to Amélie.

“And our enemies?”

“They have gone,” replied Amélie.

“I shall see the Clos Pommier again!”

A look of joy irradiated his face. Like most of the French farmers, he loved his farm almost as much as his family.

“His wits are coming back!”

Vaucoubert had come in with large plates of omelette and fried potatoes.

The German officer, more of a shadow than even Captain de Value, rose slowly from his chair.

“Lieutenant Schlimp, this is my daughter.” One side of the Lieutenant’s face was bandaged; only one eye was visible, but it was a bright, cheerful brown eye. The other, in fact, was blind. The Lieutenant tried to bow. “I can not speak French,” he began; “but I know a little English.”

“I speak English,” Amélie interposed. She knew that the young man was about to speak well of her dear father, and she wanted to hear what he would say.

“Your father saved my life, little girl,” he said — “or what there is of it. There is not much. You French people may be kind to me with a clear conscience, since I can never fight again; but I will tell you what your father has done for me ——”

“First, we must breakfast,” said the Captain. “And then, Amélie, you have much to tell me.”

He put his arm around Amélie, and they went to the table. Pierre and Jean, loudly lamenting, had been taken away by Vaucoubert. The father and daughter spent nearly the whole afternoon in the garden; it was walled from the rest of the world by broken stones and bent iron and bricks.

“A brave little girl!”

Nevertheless, Captain de Value wished that Amélie had stayed with Bertrand. Bertrand was so dependent and helpless, while Amélie had the power of conquering difficulties.

“The American authorities have probably sent him back to Havre,” he said. “We must find out, as soon as I can walk well.

“I shall not be able to fight for France,” he said sadly. “You will never hear your father called ‘General.’ It is almost a pity that you’re a girl, Amélie. You might one day be a general or even a marshal of France.”

"I am glad that I am a girl,—I should not want to lose my arm or my eyes."

"You don't understand patriotism, Amélie."

"Oh, I would lose an eye or an arm to save you, papa, but not to fight other people!"

"You're not a soldier, my dear! I shall get permission to visit the United States, if Bertrand has not been sent back, and find him. There is Red Cross work to do there."

"But Bertrand is safe."

"I hope so. O my dear," he added, seeing the anxious look on Amélie's face, "I shall not leave you behind! We will take Vaucoubert and go together."

Amélie kissed him silently.

"Yes, if you will write a letter for me to Bordeaux, I shall ask permission to leave France for a time, since I am so useless. I can not even draw maps. I wish I could take that poor German boy with me. He will die if he is not well taken care of. And Vaucoubert is such a good nurse! The army could lend us a surgeon for only a week. It was time enough," he added, looking at the empty sleeve. "What can we do for this fellow Christian of ours, who can no longer fight against us?"

"Why, the Sisters!" cried Amélie.

“Are there Sisters here?”

“Yes; they have a hospital. I have a letter to the Sisters here at Senlis.”

“Well,” said Captain de Value, “I think a boy is nice to have in one’s house; but, for real consolation, a father needs a girl like you!”

Amélie was delighted; she had always secretly feared that her father loved Bertrand more than he loved her.

At four o’clock Vaucoubert forced the tired Captain to go to bed. There she had to go over the whole story for Vaucoubert. He told her that he had become mixed up among the trains on the night he had lost her and Bertrand. Troops were coming and going. He was forced, in a crowd, into the train for Paris; and there he heard that Captain de Value was at Senlis. He admitted that he should have gone on to Havre. “But what could a poor musician do, alone in the world?”

At Senlis, the battle opened the day after he arrived. The destruction was frightful,—“as you can see, my dear!” He himself had hidden in the cellar of the chateau, from which there was an underground passage to the road. He crept out, to look for his friend among the dead and

wounded,—this at the risk of his life, for the fire still kept up. He found a young German alive among the dead.

“You are a good Christian,” the poor young Lieutenant had said. “Many have passed and I called out, but they heeded not. ‘Oh, he is German!’ one said. ‘Let him die.’ And the poor young man told me afterward that he had thought: ‘Are these Christians who talk thus?’ And yet he added: ‘When I think that we have killed their fathers and sons and ruined their homes, perhaps they are pardonable.’—‘But,’ I said as I put him into the underground passage, ‘we are not pagans—in France.’ I went back to look for your father. He was lying under a dead horse. He was unconscious. I succeeded at least in getting him into the passage. ‘Now,’ I said, ‘the Germans can come back when they like.’ But an awful thing occurred.”

According to the story of Vaucoubert, shrapnel was falling everywhere. There were deafening noises. Vaucoubert was alone in the underground passage, with Captain de Value, seeming dead, and with the young German officer, who could not keep back his groans. Vaucoubert intended to get into the cellar at the base of the east tower; from there he knew that the way was

clear. But then there was a crash overhead. The gray tower, with the top like a pepper-box, suddenly smashed down, closing the opening into the cellar. The air was full of dust, and all was darkness. It was a sad position for Vaucoubert. What help could he expect? He was imprisoned with two wounded men. Crash followed after crash; the air became as poisonous as gas from an open burner.

"Sir," said the wounded German, "I am dying! You will find my Rosary in the breast of my coat. Can you say it?"

"I am not a pagan," grunted Vaucoubert, indignantly. "I have a chaplet of my own."

"If you should escape from this," the German Lieutenant whispered, "you will write my mother at Coblenz that I died for the Fatherland. And remember that I thank you. You will find my mother's card in my coat pocket."

"I'll say nothing about the Fatherland," said Vaucoubert, and he began the Rosary, choking between every word. He could hear the young German's faint responses. And, in spite of this anxiety, he was pleased to hear that Captain de Value had begun to groan. He still lived!

When the Rosary was finished, there was silence for a while, broken after a long interval by

another crash. There shot a glimpse of light into this dark place, and Vaucoubert saw a white cat run from one side of the tunnel to the other, and disappear. There must be some way out. Vaucoubert had marked the vanishing place of the cat. He thrust his arm into it; the débris gave way, and showed light beyond. It was not easy for an old man to widen the passage made by the cat—who had guessed at it by instinct,—but he did this. It took him nearly all night to get his charges through the cellar and into one of the rooms at the chateau. The next day an army surgeon was found, and Vaucoubert was the only nurse.

“As to Jean and Pierre, the little imps!—they just walked in, and we had to take care of them,” said Vaucoubert. “It was, of all times, the most terrible. There is no doubt that their father and mother are buried in the ruins of their house. But they have relatives in Monteuil; and perhaps the good Olivers will take care of them until these relatives are found. No man can deal with them. They need a strong woman’s hand.”

When Vaucoubert had finished his story, Amélie cried with all her heart. Her poor father,—her dear, dear father! How he had

suffered! And she away from him! He could never be a General now,—never! And both his father and grandfather had been Generals!

As Vaucoubert and Amélie went slowly toward the house, Pierre and Jean ran out of a lilac bush.

“We have been good! Give us chocolates, please!” cried Pierre. “We were lost, and we found ourselves!”

“And we did not twist the cat’s tail. It ran away. We have been good, big boys. Do not let the Old One slap us, little girl!”

“Run!” said Vaucoubert. “Run! Oliver will give you bread and sugar.”

Amélie’s letter to the Sisters, whose hospital had been spared by the invaders, was of great use. The German officer could not be moved from the chateau at once; but a future place of convalescence was ready for him until he could be exchanged.

Captain de Value gained strength. His progress was slow, owing to his anxiety about Bertrand; and the gloom of the war hung over him. Both the convent and the hospital had been spared at Senlis. It is part of history how the bravery of the curé helped to save the beautiful cathedral. The Sisters and the children of the

convent had begged the Germans to be lenient, and to leave them undisturbed. Their request was granted.

Jacques Oliver came to his senses when he saw his wife and his daughter; and their happiness was very great. The father and mother of Pierre and Jean still lay under their ruined house. In their gratitude, the Olivers were very glad to take care of the children until some of their relatives should come for them.

Bertrand had not been sent back,—in fact, Vaucoubert determined to go to the United States with Captain de Value and Amélie.

“I am of no use to my own country,” he said.

XV

THE MEETING OF FATHER AND SON

THE trenches were still full of fighting men, the telegraph lines were carrying messages of the dead and dying, the world was filled with the noise of war, when Captain de Value, Vaucoubert, and Amélie sailed for New York. Everybody on the steamer was very kind to the disabled French officer. The Captain and Vaucoubert had been given special work for the Red Cross by the French Government. There were times during the voyage when it seemed that he must die on the deck, he was so weak, and semi-blindness had come on; he could see only through strong glasses. He brightened up when his ship passed the Statue of Liberty in the most beautiful bay of the world, and at last he stepped on the shore of his wife's country.

Amélie opened her eyes in amazement.

"I never dreamed that mamma could have lived in a big country like this," she said.

"Live and learn!" cried Vaucoubert, im-

pressed by the sight of the biggest skyscrapers. "It is one of the wonders of the world. It is as splendid as the music of a great composer."

It would have seemed most wonderful to Vaucoubert had he known that his nephew had led the choir and Bertrand had sung in the church where they heard Mass on the first Sunday after their arrival in New York. But by this time, Guy Vaucoubert was in France, in the ranks, and Bertrand was with his great-uncle in Clarence. Captain de Value found a telegram from Mr. Watson asking him to come to Clarence at once, and giving careful directions as to the way of reaching that town. Here Amélie's knowledge of English came in.

"How can so many sensible people speak such a language?" asked Vaucoubert. "It seems terrible. Of course the Germans speak German,—that is because they are so obstinate; but these Americans are a different people, and one expects more of them."

"I think," Amélie said to her father, after this speech, "that our dear Vaucoubert says silly things sometimes."

"We all say silly things sometimes."

"You never do, papa."

"Oh, yes, I do! But when I am tempted to

consider another person silly, I always go back into my mind and find out how silly I have been. It seems very foolish to strangers when one criticises them. Do you remember the person who came to our place once? (I forget whether he was an Englishman or an American.) He thought all the peasants 'silly' because they wore wooden shoes."

"It does seem silly to see people eating maize (corn they call it) off the cob. Vaucoubert showed me a picture of it yesterday, and assured me that it is frequently done."

"It was probably one of the amusements of your mother's youth," replied Captain de Value, laughing. "But suppose I let you dip your bread in wine and water at the table of this hotel, as you have often done? People here would think that I was making a drunkard of you."

"O papa!"

"Yes. And do you remember the American Catholic girl who was astonished when she saw the acolytes carrying the blessed bread around the church at Senlis? She had never seen it done in her own country and she was shocked because the people ate it. She accepted it finally as an old and absurd custom."

"She was silly!"

"No, only inexperienced. It is a sign of provincialism to find fault with what we have never seen before."

"What is 'provincialism,' papa?"

"The quality of being so satisfied with what we do that we find fault with other people for doing anything else. We are in a wonderful country. Let us enjoy it, and not find fault. To-morrow for Clarence and our dear Bertrand!"

The next morning, Amélie almost wept when she found the sky gray and a drizzling rain coming down. The weather always looks worse from a hotel window than from one's own home. There a girl or boy can always find things to do in spite of the rain; in a hotel there is nothing. The train did not start until one o'clock.

At breakfast, however, the waiter addressed Amélie as "Miss" several times. And after breakfast Captain de Value felt so well that he proposed to "do" the Metropole Museum, and then to go to a great department store to buy some gifts for Bertrand. The morning passed quickly.

The night was spent at Buffalo. The Captain, like most strangers, would see Niagara

Falls. And then he would go to Chicago, to arrange some business with the French Consul.

Amélie was charmed with Niagara Falls. It was too beautiful! The immense, white plumes of water were like the tips of great angels' wings. For an hour she forgot even Bertrand.

"O father," she said, "it is the most splendid thing in the world."

* * * * *

At Clarence, an automobile awaited them. Out of it jumped an elderly man and Bertrand. The elderly man was tall, dressed in a suit of gray clothes, which made him look younger than sixty-five and he had kind gray eyes. Amélie noticed that, as he stooped to kiss her, he was very tall. But Bertrand had changed. He was taller, of course; he laughed louder; his hands were rough. Mr. Watson called him the "kid"; he rushed about, and looked after their trunks. His face was brown, and he said: "Hello, Amélie!" He was different: he had become a man, an "American," even in so short a time; and he spoke English. His face was lighted by happiness. He had been prepared, so that he did not appear to notice his father's armless sleeve or his halting step.

Mr. Watson stood with his back to the group. He was deeply touched when he saw the affectionate meeting of these three. He said to himself:

“I would give one of my arms to have children to love me like that!”

He still kept his back to the group; tears filled his eyes.

“I’ve given all my spare hours to music and all my others to business, but this love is better than all.”

“O dearest father,” he heard Bertrand say over and over again, “we will never part again,—never, never!”

The automobile rushed through a long country road, past farms with wooden fences, some of which needed repair; past painted and unpainted houses, with chickens wandering about in the front yards; past oak woods and some pines; past whole acres of glass houses, where early vegetables and violets and roses were grown; past two or three country churches, one with a golden cross; and past one schoolhouse, with a weathercock.

“All wood!” Captain de Value was amazed. “Are there no stone houses or brick barns?”

“A few,” Mr. Watson answered. “Wooden

houses are warmer than stone, and one gets used to them."

"It is not a gentleman's country," Amélie said, in an undertone, to her father. "No chateaux, no manor houses,—just poor wooden boxes!"

"Hush, dear!" replied her father.

"You're wrong there!" Bertrand broke in. "There are lots of nice people here, and nearly everybody on these farms has an automobile."

"What's that, if you have to live in a wooden house, with zigzag fences?" returned Amélie, still in an undertone. "It's not nice, I tell you!"

"It's American," answered Bertrand; "and that is nice enough for me!"

Amélie was inclined to cry. Could this be her own, dear brother Bertrand?

Mr. Watson laughed.

"So soon an American!" he said.

"Well, after all I have gone through, and the fight I have had, I've got to be an American while I'm here, to hold my own. Besides, since I've seen papa" (he spoke in English, and lowered his voice), "I must grow up very fast, and be a man; and a boy becomes a man more quickly in America than in France."

Amélie felt as if the world had turned upside down. She was jealous of her great-uncle: he had taken her dear "baby brother" away from her,—her little Bertrand! To make it worse, Captain de Value said, looking at Bertrand's upright figure through his glasses:

"He looks more manly. He will need all his strength and energy; for his father is losing both."

Bertrand put his head for a moment on his father's shoulder.

"O papa, how good it is to have you!"

Vaucoubert looked with great disapproval at the landscape. He had not quite recovered from the joy he felt when he heard that his dear Guy had become a soldier of France, and he had hoped to admire a country that had not spoiled his nephew's patriotism.

"It's a poor country in winter," he said,—"no poplar trees and no apple orchards. What do they do for cider? A poor country!"

"You should see New York!" cried Bertrand.

"I have seen Paris," answered Vaucoubert, coldly.

"So did I—once," returned Bertrand. "But Paris is not a patch on New York."

"Go slow, kid!" said Mr. Watson. "You're

right, but do not shock people. You can be a good American without talking about it so much,—well, here we are!”

They drove up the broad road to a large house of many windows, with a great, circular sweep of steps to the door. The house was evidently of well-painted wood, but a fine house nevertheless. A man ran down the steps to help the new arrivals.

“A veritable chateau!” said Captain de Value.

“No: only an honest farmhouse, entirely at your service for the rest of your life, if you choose,” said Mr. Watson, cordially, throwing his overcoat to the waiting-man. “Now let me assist you. First my niece!”

Dusk had not yet begun to fall. Vaucoubert had seen two figures—a man and a woman—pass through their car at Chicago; and then, evidently noticing that he spoke French, they had taken a seat just behind him. Captain de Value had the sofa at the end of the Pullman car, and Amélie was with him. These two strangers talked for a while, much to Vaucoubert’s pleasure. He was glad to hear his beloved French. After a time the man had offered him a cigar. Vaucoubert preferred not to smoke; but, nevertheless, he was grateful. The man had been in

Montreal; he managed an opera troupe, generally of small children who could sing.

“What a pity!” Vaucoubert had said. “You will spoil their voices.”

Vaucoubert had become very well acquainted with these people; but he had not given them his name, and he had not heard their names. He recalled their conversation as he saw these two figures slide away into the oak wood near the house,—first stopping to observe the arriving group. Once in his room, he recalled, too, that the man had said he had found a fine boy soprano in New York, that he had lost him, that he had heard that the boy had gone West, and that he was now on his track. “The opera of ‘The Little Prince’ would never succeed without him in Montreal,” they had said. Vaucoubert had talked about music with the two for a time; then he and his party had gone into the dining car, and he had lost sight of his compatriots. And here they were at Clarence. He could not fail to recognize them, but he forgot all about them in the delights of Mr. Watson’s house. There were two music rooms, containing two grand pianos and all kinds of musical instruments, among them a violoncello by a famous maker.

“How,” he asked, “can all these things be in the house of an American farmer?”

“An American farmer may look after three or four farms, as I do,” laughed Mr. Watson, “and yet have time to love music, and even to offer a prize for good songs, which I have done. Here’s the prize song.”

Vaucoubert was delighted when he learned that his nephew had gained the prize and won the grand piano.

“An American farmer with such taste!” he said. “I expected only Red Indians. Come: I will play the accompaniment, and you will sing it, Bertrand.”

Vaucoubert took his place at the piano. Bertrand held back; his eyes filled with tears, and his hands trembled, as he held the music.

“Oh, tell him, uncle!” he whispered.

“Well, Mr. Vaucoubert, I must tell you something, though I hate it as much as you do; Bertrand has, unfortunately, lost his voice.”

“Impossible!” said Vaucoubert. “He had an angelic voice. Impossible! Why should the good God punish him so?”

“God knows best,” answered Mr. Watson. “The loss of his voice may not have been a pun-

ishment: it may have been for some good purpose."

Vaucoubert left the piano, and did not come from his room until after dinner. Looking out over the roof from the veranda, to the west, he imagined he saw a dark figure apparently watching the house. He was so wretched that this misfortune had come to Bertrand that he could think of nothing else. Afterward he heartily wished that he had spoken of the appearance of this figure to Mr. Watson.

The dinner was a merry one. In honor of the occasion, Mr. Watson had produced a number of very gay "crackers"; and even Captain de Value was compelled to wear a military cap, which contained the motto:

Little soldier, run away,
And you can fight another day!

Amélie was adorned with a white Pierrette cap, with large red circles on it; and her motto read:

Dance and sing while it is light:
Danger cometh with the night.

"We have no danger to fear this night," Captain de Value said, "with all that we love best about us."

Mr. Watson, so frank, so kind, so considerate, had quite won the heart of Captain de Value.

Bertrand had caught cold on his way to Clarence. Mr. Watson's doctor was compelled to perform an operation on his throat, and he became as Mr. Watson said, "a voiceless nightingale." As it is the male nightingale that sings, his uncle's comparison was not so bad as it might seem. For a time the loss of his voice almost broke his heart. He had been made to believe that he possessed one of the most beautiful voices in the world. People in New York had petted him; the priest at the church had praised him, and he looked forward to a time when his father would love him as much as he loved Amélie. In his heart, Bertrand believed that Captain de Value loved Amélie better because she was the more clever of the two. Now that he had such a beautiful voice, his father might love him as much as Amélie.

Bertrand was a foolish boy, you see, to let such an idea remain in his mind; for his father loved one child as much as the other, only in a different way.

Bertrand, before he saw his father, felt as if the horrible secret—the loss of his voice—would make a great difference when it was revealed.

“What!” his father might say. “You careless boy,—you who were silly enough to put your head out of the car window in a snowstorm, to buy sweets and peanuts, and to lose your voice! How can you ever expect me to love you?”

Mr. Watson kept him in the open air. He hunted rabbits, he worked among the chickens, he played hockey with the Clarence boys, he grew stronger and more vigorous. “When you are not at your books,” said Mr. Watson, “you must be in the open air.” If Bertrand had not worked among the fowls for several hours there would be no sweets for him at dinner. “You must keep your good manners, of course,” said the uncle; “but you will not be allowed to have soft hands.”

XVI

BERTRAND'S HEROISM

ONE day Bertrand had received a great shock,—a shock which changed his point of view of life.

He and John Lockyard—one of the men who looked after the pigs—were walking near the big pond (it was almost a lake) just outside the farmyard. The pond was half covered with ice. Lockyard discovered two wild ducks entangled in a network of bushes near the middle of the pond. Their legs were caught. A better net could not have been devised. The bushes were tied tight by a vine which almost stifled their growth. Lockyard pulled off his coat.

“Wild ducks for supper!” he said.

“No,—it is not worth it. There will be a lot in the pond to-morrow. They will be coming in, because we are having frost, and there’s snow promised by the clouds. You can easily get a dozen with your gun. The ice will not hold, and the pond has a treacherous bottom. *I* know,” said Bertrand, thinking of his own difficulties in the pond a few days before, when he had thrown

a hockey ball at a crow and endeavored to retrieve it.

"I'll try," said Lockyard, not pleased at being taught something about an American pond by a French boy. He took off his coat, his waistcoat, and his boots and socks.

"It is not worth it!" Bertrand called out, as Lockyard stepped from one piece of ice to another.

The ducks struggled more fiercely than ever at his approach.

Mr. Watson came out of the barn at this moment. He stopped and called out:

"Come back, Lockyard! It's deep out there!"

Lockyard leaned forward, grasped the leg of the nearest duck, lost his balance and went under the water. The other duck, released, flew upward with a cry of joy.

In a few moments Bertrand, confident in his power as a good swimmer, had thrown off his outer garments and shoes. He hopped from one cake of ice to the other, and plunged in after Lockyard. The water was freezing, but Bertrand was in a warm glow. It was not an easy matter to drag Lockyard to the shore. Finally he was safe, standing among the dry reeds, shiv-

ering, the unfortunate duck still clasped in his right fist. Bertrand laughed, although he was dripping.

"There is a tub of hot water in the barn," said Bertrand. "Lockyard had better get into it at once. The stableman will give him a rub, and I'll run to his house for dry clothes."

"Not at all!" Mr. Watson spoke rather impatiently. "You will put on your coat and overcoat, run home as fast as you can, and get to bed. The stableman will take care of Lockyard.—Lockyard, you're an idiot, to risk your own life and my nephew's for a supper. Go straight to the barn and get into the hot bath."

"I can't go, sir" (Lockyard was sincerely grateful), "without thanking this young gentleman for saving my life. My wife and my children will go down on their knees to him, sir."

"What for?" asked Mr. Watson. "*I* don't think they've much reason to be thankful. I wouldn't like to have a fool like you in my family. As to my nephew, he did only what any decent young man, who knows *he* can swim, does when he sees another trying to drown himself."

"I say he is a hero, sir."

"Go into the tub at once!" roared Mr. Watson.

"As to you, Bertrand, you did nothing but what anybody else would do in your place. Run home now, and keep warm till dinner time."

Bertrand went home, astonished. He had expected that his uncle would call him a brave boy and perhaps give him a reward. He had often imagined himself as the hero of just such an episode—at Mers, for instance; and then, in his dreams, the whole population had come out to greet him with bands and flags and flowers; the mayor and the curé had publicly thanked him, and an arch had been put up in front of the De Value house, with the legend, "Bertrand the Hero."

As he ran home he reflected that things were so different in America. His uncle seemed to think that anybody who could swim would jump in to save anybody that could not. How differently Vaucoubert would have behaved! "Hero of beautiful France," he would have said, "come to my arms! The laurel wreaths of glory await thee." On the whole, however, Bertrand concluded, after he was safe in his room, refreshing himself with a hot lemonade, that a warm bed was, after all, better than a laurel wreath.

Mr. Watson congratulated Bertrand at dinner on his quick recovery, and announced that "the

duck-hunter was quite well. The hot bath did it."

"I suppose, Bertrand," Mr. Watson remarked the next day, "that you expected me to say you were a brave boy, to jump into the water after that idiot, Lockyard."

Bertrand blushed.

"Of course you did! Let me say that I think it requires more courage very often for a boy to tell the truth than to jump into the water after a drowning person. If you had, under trying temptation, told the truth when it seemed to be your personal interest not to do so, I should have thought your action more heroic. Do you understand me?"

When people to whom Lockyard had told the story of his perilous adventure tried to congratulate Bertrand, he laughed and said: "I only helped Lockyard to get his duck." If it had not been for his uncle's attitude, Bertrand would have tired everybody by the constant repetition of the details: "And then, just as Lockyard was suffocating, I——" Or, "The moment he disappeared in the freezing water, I plunged after him ——"

"No *I's!*" said his uncle; and it was a lesson to Bertrand,—a very good lesson.

But now that Captain de Value and Amélie and Vaucoubert knew that he had lost his voice, he was happy. He was sure that his father loved him none the less. And here they all were, together under one roof! His voice, he knew, would never return; but that would not prevent him from doing his duty and making his father proud of him.

While Mr. Watson, Vaucoubert, and Amélie were practicing at the piano in the East Room, and Captain de Value was sitting near the big window listening to the three, Bertrand remembered that he had left in the barn a bag of chestnuts carefully saved for the home-coming of Amélie. It would be delightful to roast them at the big grate. He ran through the dining-room, through the butler's pantry, and out into the garden at the back. He passed to the side of the barn. In the light behind the thin curtains of the window, he saw his father's face. He stopped to look at it, and then went on, murmuring, "Dear papa!" How happy he was!

A woman in a black cloak came out of the arbor.

"Dear papa!" she whispered sarcastically. "You'll not see your dear papa very soon, if

ever.—Come! We'll catch him as he comes out of the barn; the automobile is ready."

A man, thus addressed, joined the woman. As the light from the window shone upon them for a moment, Bertrand might have easily known them. They were the Simon couple who had met Vaucoubert on the train from Chicago.

These two softly followed the boy, and watched him as he turned the key of the barn door. Full of happiness, he tried to sing. There was a good note or two and a series of discords. He tried again: only flatted notes resulted.

The key of the door did not turn easily; Bertrand, still singing, examined it carefully by the glow of his pocket electric light.

The man and woman drew back into the shadow.

"He has lost his voice!" murmured Simon.

"He sings like a crow. It would not be worth while to take him, Simon. We must find another 'Little Prince.' If we could only have kept him when we had him!"

"Come!" replied Simon. "Our time has been wasted."

And these two dark shadows crept away.

The automobile glided softly over the well-kept road. Captain de Value, as he caught a

glimpse of its lamp from the window, did not realize that his son had escaped a great danger because he had lost his voice. The Captain reflected that, to Bertrand, the loss of voice was a temporary affliction, because people would never "pet" him now, and say how "angelic" he was. For his own sake, it seemed a good thing that his voice had gone. A conceited boy is very unpleasant to other people, and he soon becomes so vain that all the strong qualities of his character disappear.

As to the Simons, one can quite safely say that justice eventually overtook them. The complaint of the Schmidmeyers to the Federal Officials brought them to jail.

When Bertrand returned with the chestnuts, the group at the piano were singing a hymn to the Guardian Angel:

" O Angel dear, so wise and strong,
To whom God gave me! in your care
I shall feel safe the whole night long,
And in your love and kindness share."

It was not easy to walk in the paths and roads near Mr. Watson's house. The ground was wet; the mud was sticky and of the consistency of leather. This kept Captain de Value in the

house, and his health suffered. Mr. Watson was in high boots, encrusted with mud, when he was not at his meals or at the piano with Vaucoubert. He had two passions—farming and music,—and it was a great pleasure for him to have Vaucoubert with him. He was naturally very much concerned about Captain de Value's health.

Amélie and Bertrand were driven in a carriage to school: they could not walk. And this astonished them, accustomed as they had been to the good roads in France. Bertrand liked his school; Amélie did not like hers. In the first place, she objected to going to school at all. No girls that she knew in France went to school every day; they all had governesses at home. And she had never met any of these girls before, and she knew nothing of their fathers and mothers. And, then, only the Mother Superior spoke French. She did not like the school at all. Mr. Watson laughed, and Captain de Value was amused.

“I imagine that your mother went to that kind of school,” said the latter.

“How horrid for mamma!” protested Amélie.

“Don't put on airs, dear,” said her grand-uncle. “You'll get used to it.”

A heavy snowstorm, followed by a strong frost, changed Amélie's point of view. She and Ber-

trand went across the fields on snowshoes to school every day, and nothing could induce her to stay at home even for a half day. The winter sports delighted her, and Bertrand was happy "as a cricket."

Amélie learned very soon that she should not apply French ideas to a country so different from her own. To begin with, she exclaimed against "chops" and potatoes and porridge for breakfast. "It is savage!" she said. "In France, a roll and coffee with milk was enough." Bertrand and the rest of the family went on calmly eating sausages and even hot cakes in the morning. And after a time Amélie found that a roll and coffee at half-past seven were not enough. At twelve o'clock she was so hungry as to feel "unladylike," as she phrased it; and she was glad to accept the gift of an additional sandwich from a fellow-pupil, "whose parents she did not know," but the sandwich was very good.

XVII

A LETTER FROM OLD FRIENDS

AMÉLIE at first strongly objected to Bertrand's going to school without an elder person with him. She could not think of such a thing!

"He ought to have a *bonne*, uncle," she said.

"A what?" asked Mr. Watson, who liked to hear Amélie's views,—“a nurse, do you mean, for a great, hulking boy like your brother?”

"At home, all boys of his class would be accompanied to school by a *bonne*; and I, too, would be so accompanied. If my father were quite well he would see that the present arrangement is not proper."

"It is quite proper here, Emily," answered Mr. Watson, who always insisted on Englishing names; "and your father understands it. Bertrand would not dare to show his face in school, if I sent an old woman with him—on snowshoes." (Mr. Watson laughed.) "As for you, you are quite able to take care of yourself when you drive or walk. There are half a dozen girls coming or

going your way, not to mention Bertrand and the other boys. You must learn American ways, little Emily." But American ways seemed queer to Amélie. Unlike Bertrand, she never became entirely "Americanized." Uncle Watson liked her, but he thought her "strange."

At recess, when it rained and the girls could not play games in the open air, Amélie always brought with her "something" to sew or to knit or to embroider. This excited amusement at first. The girls preferred to yawn, to eat apples, to read story-books or papers; a few gathered at the window, and wished that the rain would cease. Amélie's knitting-needles clicked.

"What are you working for all the time?" asked Anna Singleton, the girl from whom Amélie had accepted the sandwich.

"I must not be idle. See!—if I knit for twenty minutes every day, I can finish something in two weeks."

"How queer!" Anna Singleton was joined by some other girls. "And do you knit when 'company' comes?"

Amélie thought a moment; it was hard to translate the word "company" into French.

"Oh, yes!" she answered. "My mother always embroidered or knitted when guests came,

if it was not a grand occasion. And, if Uncle Watson invited some people to dinner, I should ask permission to knit or to embroider. I was well taught," added Amélie, with pride. "Madame la Brune taught me. This sock is for a soldier in France; the silk cravat I finished yesterday is to be given to my father on his birthday."

"It is so much easier to buy things!" said Anna Singleton. "I shouldn't be very grateful for home-made presents. Besides, your uncle is rich; he has a big house."

Amélie looked at the speaker in amazement.

"Why should I buy a cravat for my father? I have been taught to make better cravats than you can buy. My father loves the things I make for him."

"I don't think my father could wear a sock I would make for him." (The girls laughed.) "Home-made things are not stylish. We buy everything. Papa can afford it."

Nevertheless, Amélie's example had its effect, and the Sisters were glad of it.

Very often Captain de Value, who could limp about, came over to see Amélie at recess, and to bring her cookies, which she shared with her companions. The girls all liked him very much.

One day he brought for Amélie's class a dozen little baskets that one of his old soldiers, now an invalid, had made and sent to him from France. He was altogether so nice that the twelve girls, in the dull hours of the rainy days, began to make him twelve cravats for his birthday. Amélie no longer worked alone, and on his birthday the Captain's neckties ranged in colors from black to pale pink. But he was careful to wear them all in succession.

The children had several letters from the Schmidmeyers. Carl's were full of delights from New York,—the "movies," the electric lights, the crowds. At last a rather sorrowful one came.

Mr. Schmidmeyer had fallen in front of an automobile in Third Avenue, and in consequence his left leg had been cut off. Carl, being the eldest, must go to work. Of course he must give up school. His parents could no longer support him; for Mr. Schmidmeyer's convalescence would last at least a year.

The family listened to the letter, which Bertrand read, with deep regret.

"Oh, I am sorry,—so sorry!" cried Amélie. "Those people were very, very kind to us!"

"Nobody could be kinder to me," said Ber-

trand. "O Uncle Watson, can't you do something for them?"

"Do, do, dear Uncle!" Amélie supplicated,—
"oh, do!"

"I don't know them," answered Uncle Watson, looking out the window. "They haven't done anything for *me*. Can't *you* do something?"

Captain de Value dropped his paper. He was sitting by the fire, listening quietly. The ways of Uncle Watson always amused him.

"Do something!" repeated Bertrand. "What can *I* do? Perhaps papa will give me some money."

"No doubt he will, if you ask him." (Uncle Watson stopped to light his pipe.) "But if I wanted to help a friend, I should not begin by asking somebody else to give him money."

There was silence; the children looked at Captain de Value, who purposely averted his face. Then Bertrand fixed his eyes on Uncle Watson and thought.

"Uncle," he said, "might we not have Carl here, to learn farming? He could have half my clothes, and sleep in the other iron bed in my room."

"I have money in my box to pay his fare!" exclaimed Amélie. "Papa gave me all I had left

over, after the voyage, for Christmas money. I can make all the Christmas gifts I need."

"Carl can work for his board and lodging, and I will pay him from my pocket money for sawing part of my wood," added Bertrand.

"You will have to do without something,—chocolates, for example, and new music."

"Oh, that's all right, Uncle Watson! Now that I have lost my voice, I don't need new music."

"But if I sent Carl Schmidmeyer to school (it is a pity that he should lose his education) and teach him farming at the same time, it will be expensive. Who is to pay me for the experience I give away?" asked Uncle Watson, solemnly. "It cost me money and time to learn farming, and I can't be expected to give the result to Carl Schmidmeyer for nothing."

Amélie stopped to poke the grate fire. She wondered why her uncle could not be more generous; yet, after all, the Schmidmeyers were not *his* friends. "Oh, these Americans," she said to herself, "they can never be French—poor things!"

"It's a rotten world," Bertrand burst out. "You're obliged to pay for everything you get."

"That's true," answered Uncle Watson, cordially. "I have always found it so.

"It's a very good world we live in,
To lend or to take or to give in;
But to borrow, to beg, or to get one's own,
'Tis the very worst world that ever was known."

"Come, my dear Uncle Watson!" said Captain de Value, who had listened carefully. "It is not quite so bad as that. We often get our own; but for a poor man who has to borrow or beg, it is a hard world, and that is just the reason why we want to help this poor Schmidmeyer boy. It would be unfair to ask you to do it, you have so much on your hands."

"Half this property is yours, as you know, Captain de Value. It was your wife's."

"Oh, very well!" said the Captain. "That has nothing to do with this case. The children are under obligation to the good Schmidmeyers,—great obligation. Now is their chance to begin to pay it off. They can not help Carl Schmidmeyer by merely wishing to do it. And I can not neglect my poor French people, to——"

"Of course not, papa!" cried Amélie. "I hate to give up things, but I see that we can't expect other people to pay our debts. After all, except

God, there is nobody but our parents who gives us anything worth while for nothing. Why, even when a girl here gives me a Christmas gift, she expects one in return. It's no sacrifice for me to give up money I don't use, but I have to give up things I have every day. Now, I'll give up sweets for dessert, and that will help toward Carl Schmidmeyer."

"I will, too!" put in Bertrand.

"It needn't come to that," Uncle Watson said. "*That* would be asking too much. Amélie will pay Carl's fare; Bertrand will share his room with Carl, and the money allowed for Bertrand's clothes can be divided between them. Amélie can knit Carl's socks and neckties, and he can pay her back when he begins to earn wages."

"I will not take a *sou*!" exclaimed Amélie, her eyes flashing,—*"no!"*

"It's only business. Do you think Carl wants to take your socks and neckties for nothing? I think we can arrange the matter, so that Carl can come and be happy in the country without the 'movies.'"

"Oh, thank you, Uncle Watson!" And the children ran out,—Amélie to write to Mrs. Schmidmeyer, and Bertrand to Carl.

"Isn't it hard on the children?" Captain de

Value asked. "They want to be generous, and your business-like methods rather chill them."

"The worst thing that can happen to children," replied Mr. Watson, "is to have them taught that they can receive things without paying for them in some way. It is a serious fault in our American life. It makes children ungrateful, and parents unhappy. This is not an easy world to live in, and it is a mistake to lead young people to believe that it is. Your young people will be all the better for giving up something in order to show their gratitude to Mrs. Schmidmeyer. I like their spirit all the better because I gather that Carl is not specially agreeable to them."

Captain de Value laughed.

"It seems hard on them; but you are wise."

On the following Tuesday evening Carl came. He had a lonely journey, and when the children met him at the station he looked sad and hungry.

"Carl!" exclaimed Bertrand. "Welcome, Carl! Papa, this is Carl!"

"Oh, we are so happy to have you!" cried Amélie, shaking hands warmly. "You have just come in time to see the new little pink pigs."

Oh, and all your family will come in the summer!"

Carl's eyes brightened. This was not home, but he was among friends. He bowed to Captain de Value; it was the sight of the grave, kindly Captain that gave him the greatest consolation. He saw that, in spite of the traces of his wounds, Captain de Value was very much alive.

"Then my father will live, too," he said to himself.

"Good-evening, young man!" called out Mr. Watson. "Here, sit next to me. I don't suppose you can drive an automobile, can you? But when the spring comes you can learn to ride on one of my Iceland ponies."

Carl flushed with pleasure.

"Thank you, sir!"

"You'll find that better than the 'movies.'"

"Oh, yes, Mr. Watson! I see only shadows of ponies in the 'movies,' but you see the real things out here in the country."

"Right! And now we start!"

After dinner, Carl, who had a good baritone voice, sang with the others; he forgot to be lonely in thinking of the pleasure his first letter would give to those at home.

“After school to-morrow, Lockyard will teach you something about farming for an hour or two,” said Uncle Watson. “You are one of the family, and we are glad to have you with us. Good-night!”

Amélie said good-night, and thanked him for the photograph of Alphonsus he had brought.

“A new day will come to-morrow,” Carl said to her. “It seemed very dark before you wrote to my mother.”

Amélie thought of her own dark hours among the ruins of Senlis; and Bertrand, of his imprisonment in the Simon room.

“There is always God,” said Amélie.

“You are a good girl,” said Carl; “my mother likes me always to remember that.”

“A new day!” Captain de Value thought. “Yes,—yes,—in spite of all there *must* come a new day,—a day of peace for the world.”

Time passed. Vaucoubert, having assured himself that Captain de Value was out of danger, went back to France, in the hope of finding his nephew.

The Captain’s eyesight became better, but he finally lost the use of his legs, and somebody was called on to wheel him through the rooms and the grounds.

“God has halted me here,” he said often, “and I am grateful to be with my children,—but it is hard on an old soldier!”

But his children were glad. He could not go back to the horrors of war, and they could keep him with them. When the glad day of the Armistice came, even Bertrand, who had felt that he was growing up simply to fight, was not disappointed. “If men were good,” he thought, “we should have no wars.” But he looked proudly at his fists. “If I ought to fight, these are best!” he said.

“Boys,” answered Amélie, in disgust, “are savages,—everywhere. If the world were all girls, there would be no wars.”

THE END

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